

# Articles

## Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1993

by  
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This is the twelfth annual report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) of the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO). A total of 122 records was reviewed by the Committee in 1993. Of these, 109 (90%) were accepted, two were deferred awaiting further information, two were accorded Historical status, and 9 were not accepted.

Continuing the remarkable trend of rapid expansion of the Ontario list, four new species were added in 1993: Garganey, Marbled Murrelet, Dusky Flycatcher and Variegated Flycatcher, bringing the provincial total to 458. The Variegated Flycatcher was also a first for Canada. No new provincial breeding species were added in 1993.

Members of the OBRC in 1993 were Ronald J. Pittaway (Chairman), Margaret J. C. Bain (non-voting Secretary), Robert Curry, Nicholas G. Escott, Ross D. James, Richard W. Knapton, Dennis F. Rupert and Ronald G. Tozer (Figure 1). The Committee held two meetings in 1993, a Policy meeting in November and a March meeting to review records requiring final adjudication.

Almost 50 fewer reports were received in 1993 than in the previous year. This was mainly due, unfortunately, to the lack of the usual

spring reports forwarded by Point Pelee National Park. We very much hope that these reports will be forthcoming in the near future. Ironically, the fewer reports from visitors to Point Pelee have resulted in fewer unaccepted records, and a gratifying percentage of acceptances! The Committee was very pleased with the generally excellent level of reporting of rarities, especially the fact that several observers often took the time to send in independent reports or photographs of the same bird, giving a much more complete and detailed record. Interest is growing in subspecific identification, and many reports made a conscious effort to document a recognizable form or subspecies. Only two reports, both Lawrence's Warblers, related directly to the Recognizable Forms added to the Review List in 1992.

All Committee members cooperated in researching the reported occurrences between 1988 and 1992 inclusive, in both northern and southern Ontario, of 15 species that were deemed to be close to the OBRC criteria for removal from the Review List, i.e. more than 25 accepted reports in the province in a space of five years. After lengthy discussions at the March meeting, seven of these species were removed from the Review List for southern



Figure 1: Ontario Bird Records Committee in the Bird Room, Royal Ontario Museum, 5 March 1994. Left to right: Dennis Rupert, Ron Tozer, Bob Curry, Ron Pittaway, Nick Escott, Margaret Bain, Ross James, and Richard Knapton.

Ontario, but none from the north. The seven species so designated were: American White Pelican, Eurasian Wigeon, Gyrfalcon, Pomarine Jaeger, Laughing Gull, Varied Thrush and Yellow-throated Warbler. (Documentation for American White Pelican and Gyrfalcon was not required from northern Ontario in the old Review List in any case.) This change is effective from 1 January 1994, but records prior to this date will still require documentation and will continue to be published in the Annual Report. Obvious problems exist in Northern Ontario where there are very few birders in a vast amount of often inaccessible territory. Birds which are seen fairly regularly,

such as Western Kingbird and Varied Thrush, are reported infrequently. Development of a separate set of criteria for the North will be a point for future discussion.

Ross James has produced the amended Review List included with this issue of Ontario Birds. The new List also incorporates the changes to the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.) Check-list of North American Birds as put forward in the Thirty-ninth supplement (1993). Ross's Geese, Lewis's Woodpeckers and Harris's Sparrows are suddenly easier to talk about!

Thanks go to all the observers across the province who took the time to document and submit their observations of birds on the Review

List. All these reports, 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 1992 (Bain 1993). For each record, information on age, sex and plumage is included, where 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, 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.

For the first time, a listing of Historical Records follows the catalogue of Accepted Records in this Report. This category includes records occurring before 1981, which have been previously published, but which do not meet current documentation requirements. Its aim is to augment and make more complete our database of rare birds in Ontario. There are only two records in this section this year - it is hoped that many more observers will

submit notes, however brief, on old records that fulfill these criteria (Curry 1993). Work is also ongoing on a review of the ornithological literature prior to 1981 for appropriate records.

Discussion took place at the Policy meeting regarding the summary numbers used in this report. It was said that many readers of the report find the tripartite number, based on the system used in *British Birds* (Rogers 1988), difficult to understand. Most of those present felt that the system was a worthwhile measure of changing status, but modifications were suggested. A two-number system will now be used, with the FIRST number a total of all pre-1981 records, including Historical records, and the SECOND number a total of all records since 1 January 1981. The third number was felt to be self-evident, as it is easy to see how many records there are for the current year.

Every effort is made to verify dates, locations and observers' names, but our data are bound to include some inaccuracies. We welcome any corrections or updates to make records more exact. 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 (3/12)**

1993 — one summer adult, 4 May, Petticoat Creek C.A., *Durham* (Matthew L. Holder, Margaret Bain). This silvery-headed adult was the sixth record for Durham.

### **Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (0/6)**

1993 — one, 21-24 November, Hamilton Bay, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Bob Curry).

This corner at the west end of Hamilton Bay, overlooked by the Woodland Cemetery, may be a favourite for Western Grebes - one was seen in the same spot in April 1989.

### **Grebe (*Aechmophorus sp.*) (1/3)**

1993 — one, 11 October, Wicklow Beach, *Northumberland* (Clive E. Goodwin).

### **Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) (3/5)**

1992 — one, 30 November, Moosonee, *Cochrane* (Bryan Merritt, Doug McRae; found by Redfern Whiskeychan) - photo on file. Specimen: ROM # 157559.

This emaciated bird was brought in to the Ministry of Natural Resources in Moosonee, beyond recovery (Merritt 1993).

### **Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) (2/11)**

1993 — one, sometimes two, juveniles, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth*, Whitby, *Durham*, and Niagara-on-the-Lake, *Niagara*, 25 October - 17 December (John L. Olmsted, Rob Z. Dobos, Margaret Bain, Gordon Bellerby, Brian Henshaw, Phill Holder, Jim Hummel, Rudolf F. Koes; found independently at Whitby by George Scott).

As usual, it is difficult to be certain that all the gannet sightings at the west end of Lake Ontario in the fall of 1993 pertained to the same two juveniles, but all the descriptions were so very similar and the distances between the locations where the birds were seen so small in gannet-terms, that it was decided to treat all the reports as pertaining to the same birds.

Since Northern Gannets do not begin their post-juvenile moult until, at the earliest, the March following the year they were hatched (Palmer 1962), the very dark overall appearance of these birds was still their juvenile plumage.

### **American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) South Only (2/30)**

1992 — one, 17 August, Sarnia, *Lambton* (Gerry Clements, Art Teasel) - photo on file.

This is one of the seven species removed from the Review List in 1994. The numbers of American White Pelicans in southern Ontario have increased slowly but steadily in the last few years, and now exceed the OBRC criteria for a reportable species. Records prior to 1 January 1994 still require documentation, and will still be published in the Annual Report.

### **Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) (North Only until 1991) (1/14)**

1992 — one immature, 11-23 August, McGeachy's Pond, Erieau, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe) - photo on file.

1991 — one immature, 8-18 September, Rondeau P.P., *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe) - photo on file.

Numbers of Snowy Egrets in the province continue to fluctuate greatly. 1992 was a good year, with seven reports of a total of 13 birds, including this one; no reports were received for 1993, although a couple of sightings were mentioned in the *American Birds* Seasonal Summary (Ridout 1993).



Figure 2: Snowy Egret at McGeachy's Pond, Erieau, Kent from 11 to 23 August 1992. Photo by Al Woodliffe.

### **Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) (7/21)**

1993 — one adult, 5 May -29 June, Big Creek Marsh, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Ron Ridout).

1992 — one adult, 21 and 22 April, La Salle, *Essex* (Hank Hunt, Paul Pratt; found by Charles Wilson) - photos on file.

### **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) (5/18)**

1993 — one summer adult, 16-22 May, Cootes Paradise, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Bruce Duncan).

This bird was often hard to find, but was seen by many birders during its stay.

### **Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) (2/18)**

1993 — one adult, 10 and 11 June, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Betty Ariss, Margaret Bain).

— one adult, 1-15 November, Gosport, *Northumberland* (Don Shanahan).

### **Ibis (*Plegadis* sp.) (3/13)**

1993 — one winter adult, 7 November, Bronte, *Halton* (Mark Jennings) and Hamilton Bay, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Bob Curry).

With the hope of a first acceptable record of White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*) for the province, great care is going into the documentation of most dark ibises, some of which are bound to be seen in lighting conditions precluding specific identification.

### **Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) South Only (2/27)**

1993 — two adults, 27 March, Silver Lake, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Edward Czerwinski).

— two adult *flavirostris*, 4 April, Waterloo, *Waterloo* (Rob Z. Dobos).

1992 — two adults, 6 November 1992 - 6 January 1993, Grande Pointe, *Kent* (P. Allen Woodliffe; found by John Haggeman) - photos on file.

The orange colour of the bills on the Waterloo birds was indicative of the Greenland race *flavirostris*. A slight size difference suggested a mated pair.

### **Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) (0/1)**

1993 — one adult male, 18-23 April, Stafford Twp., *Renfrew* (Chris Michener, Catherine Bayly, Bruce Di Labio, Mark Gawn, Sid Hadlington, Steve LaForest, Myron Loback, Ken Hooles) - photos on file.

In the last 30 years, there have been spring records of this Eurasian species across North America, including most of the other Canadian provinces, and it has a known propensity to wander. It was therefore felt that this bird on this date was considerably more likely to be a true vagrant than an escape, and the species has been added to the Ontario checklist.

Account was taken of reports of exotic teal, including some Garganeys, escaping from a waterfowl collection in New York State during a severe blizzard a few weeks prior to the sighting. The reader is referred to the excellent article "The recent occurrence of Garganey in North America and the Hawaiian Islands" by Larry B. Spear et al. (1988).

### **Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) (3/57)**

1993 — one adult male, 8 March, Burlington, *Halton* (Rob Z. Dobos).

— one adult male, 11 April -6 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Steve LaForest).

— one adult male, 2 May, Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* (Margaret Bain; found by Steve Wood).

This is another species which is a "regular rarity" in spring in the marshes of southern Ontario, and has exceeded the OBRC criteria for a reportable species there. It has therefore been delisted as of 1 January 1994. Occurrences in northern Ontario will still require documentation.

The Cranberry Marsh bird was accompanied by a second drake which showed features of a hybrid American/Eurasian wigeon (*A. americana* x *A. penelope*). Such hybrids seem not unusual in British Columbia, but are considered rare on the east coast (Blake Maybank, pers. comm.).

### **Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) (0/6)**

1993 — one female, 12-15 April, Presqu'île P.P., *Northumberland* (Don Shanahan; found by Geoff Carpentier).

Up to three Tufted Ducks were seen at the west end of Lake Ontario in the early part of the year, but so far no documentation of any of these birds has been received. Two of them were seen to be banded, raising doubts as to their origin, although most reports of Tufted Ducks on the Great Lakes have been assumed to be wild birds.

### **Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) South Only (2/5)**

1993 — one first winter male, 6-20 March, Burlington, *Halton* (Kevin McLaughlin; found by Jeff Poklin, Tony Salvadori and Brian Wyatt).

— one male, 30 October - 3 November, Dewitt Road, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Ron Pittaway, David Worthington; co-finder: Jean Iron).

1970 — one first winter-second summer male *sedentaria*, 25 December 1970 - 21 July 1972, Etobicoke, *Metropolitan Toronto* and 28 November 1971, Clarkson, *Peel* (John A. Kelley, Clive E. Goodwin, Donald R. Gunn, Barry Ranford, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

1969 — one first winter male, 18 December 1969, Chippawa, *Niagara* (Harold H. Axtell, Robert F.

Andrle, J. T. Foy, Walter Klabunde, Harold D. Mitchell, Arthur E. Schaffner, Robert A. Sundell).

The 1969 - 1971 records were researched by Alan Wormington, with assistance

from Robert F. Andrie and Daniel R. Salisbury. After being shot by a hunter, or injured by some other means, the 1969 Chippawa bird remained continuously at the mouth of the Welland River until 10 January 1971, eventually attaining adult-like plumage. Apart from these two summering birds, the only other summer record in southern Ontario is the female at Darlington P.P., *Durham* in 1992 (Ontario Birds 11: 50). There is one other additional summer occurrence considered valid but apparently not documented: a male in adult plumage at Nanticoke, *Haldimand-Norfolk* on 29 June 1980, observed by Anne B. Lambert (A. Wormington, pers. comm.).

Most recent winter reports are of birds found among the huge flocks of scoters and scaup feeding on zebra mussels at the west end of Lake Ontario. Time and patience are prerequisites for finding these eiders.

**Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) (2/12)**

1993 — one, 5 October, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Bob Westmore).

**Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) (5/9)**

1993 — one first year subadult, 16 May, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Kevin McLaughlin, George Naylor).

Again, this Mississippi Kite at Pelee appeared in the narrow window between May 13th and 28th accommodating all of the existing 16 Ontario records (Wormington 1993).

**Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (8/17)**

1993 — one, 20 April, Beamer C.A., *Niagara* (George A. Meyers).

— one adult, light morph, 7 May, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Don Graham).

1992 — one adult, 28 June, Rainy River, *Rainy River* (P. Allen Woodliffe).



Figure 3: Male Common Eider at Sunnyside Beach, *Metropolitan Toronto* in December 1971. Photo by John A. Kelley.

### Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) South Only (4/26)

- 1993 — one dark morph, 31 January, Ottawa, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Don Shanahan).  
 — one dark morph, 7 March, Amherst Island, *Addington* (Don Shanahan).  
 — one gray morph, 10 April, Barrie Island Airport, *Manitoulin* (Ron Tasker).  
 — one gray morph, 18 December, Mud Creek, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Ron Tasker).  
 1992 — one juvenile, dark morph, 8 January, Walpole Island, *Lambton* (P. Allen Woodliffe).  
 1991 — one, 18 December 1991 - 12 March 1992, Junction Creek, *Sudbury* (Yvonne Crawford, John Lemon) - video on file.

John Lemon's painstaking catalogue of all the Sudbury area Gyrfalcons for the last 20 years was one of the factors taken into account in the delisting of this species from southern Ontario. About time too, say Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Manitoulin and Ottawa!

### American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) (7/33)

- 1993 — one adult male, breeding plumage, 21-28 May, Nonquon S.L., *Durham* (Margaret Bain; found by John Sabean).  
 — one adult male, breeding plumage, 22-31 May, Holland Landing S.L., *York* (John McLean, Theo Hofmann) - photos on file.  
 — three juveniles (two females, one male), 21-28 August, Windermere Basin, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Barry Cherriere, George Naylor; found by Alf Epp) - photo on file.  
 — one, 4 September, Presqu'île P.P., *Northumberland* (Don Shanahan; found by John Blaney).  
 — one adult male, winter plumage, 24-29 September, Harmony Pond, Oshawa, *Durham* (Margaret Bain; found by Harry Kerr) - photos on file.

This was a good year for sightings of this spectacular shorebird, but we still notice that not all the reports on the hotlines translate into submissions to the OBRC.



Figure 4: Three juvenile American Avocets at Windermere Basin *Hamilton-Wentworth* on 23 August 1993. Photo by Barry Cherriere.



**Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) (0/13)**

1993 — one, 18-20 May, Bright's Grove S.L., *Lambton* (Dennis Rupert; found by Rob Tymstra) - photo on file.

— one, 30 May - 3 June, Harmony Pond, Oshawa, *Durham* (Peter Burke).

Both these birds were well documented, the first by a series of excellent photographs, the second by the superb sketch reproduced here.

**Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) (3/26)**

1993 — one, 17 October, Lake Ontario off Winona, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Kevin McLaughlin).

— five, 25 October, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (John L. Olmsted).

1992 — one immature, 20 December, Port Weller, *Niagara* (Rob Z. Dobos).

— one immature, 28 December, Burlington, *Halton* (Alan Wormington).

1991 — one, 2 November, Radiant Lake, *Nipissing* (Jeff Skevington).

The Pomarine Jaeger seen on 17 October 1993 followed the boat carrying the annual OFO pelagic trip for over an hour, giving excellent opportunities for study.

This species is now uncommon but regular on Lake Ontario in the fall, and has been taken off the Review List for southern Ontario. Reports from northern Ontario will still require documentation.

**Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) (3/11)**

1993 — one, 7 October, Point Pelee N.P., *Essex* (Kevin McLaughlin).

**Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) (14/68)**

1993 — one first winter, 24 January, Queenston Heights, *Niagara* (John and Victoria Carley, Doug McRae).

— one, 26 January - 9 February, Grenadier Pond, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Bill Edmunds) - photos on file.

— one adult, 24 September, Blenheim S.L., *Kent* (Jim Coey).

— one juvenile/first winter, 30 September - 28 October, Wheatley Harbour, *Essex/Kent* (Doug McRae), and 8 October, Point Pelee, *Essex* (Kevin McLaughlin) - photos on file.

1992 — one first winter, 28 November - 3 December, Belwood Lake, *Wellington* (Mike Lepage).

Although it is quite likely that the birds seen at Niagara and at Toronto were one and the same, the Committee was not unanimous on this point, and therefore the reports are treated as separate individuals.

An impressive list of sightings in southern Ontario over the last few years delists this species there once more. However, Laughing Gull remains on the Review List for the north.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) North Only (0/5)**

1992 — one adult, 16-20 May, Moosonee and Moose Factory, *Cochrane* (Doug McRae) - photo on file.

This bird was seen at the dumps in both these nearby communities. What was probably a different bird was seen at Moose Factory on 24 May, and another was at Hannah Bay on 22 June, but unfortunately these subsequent sightings lack documentation.

**Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) (0/1)**

1993 — one adult, 9 June, Wheatley Harbour, *Kent* (Alan Wormington).

This is the first record accepted by the OBRC for the province. However, an earlier sight record at Niagara in 1958 (James 1991) is presently under review.

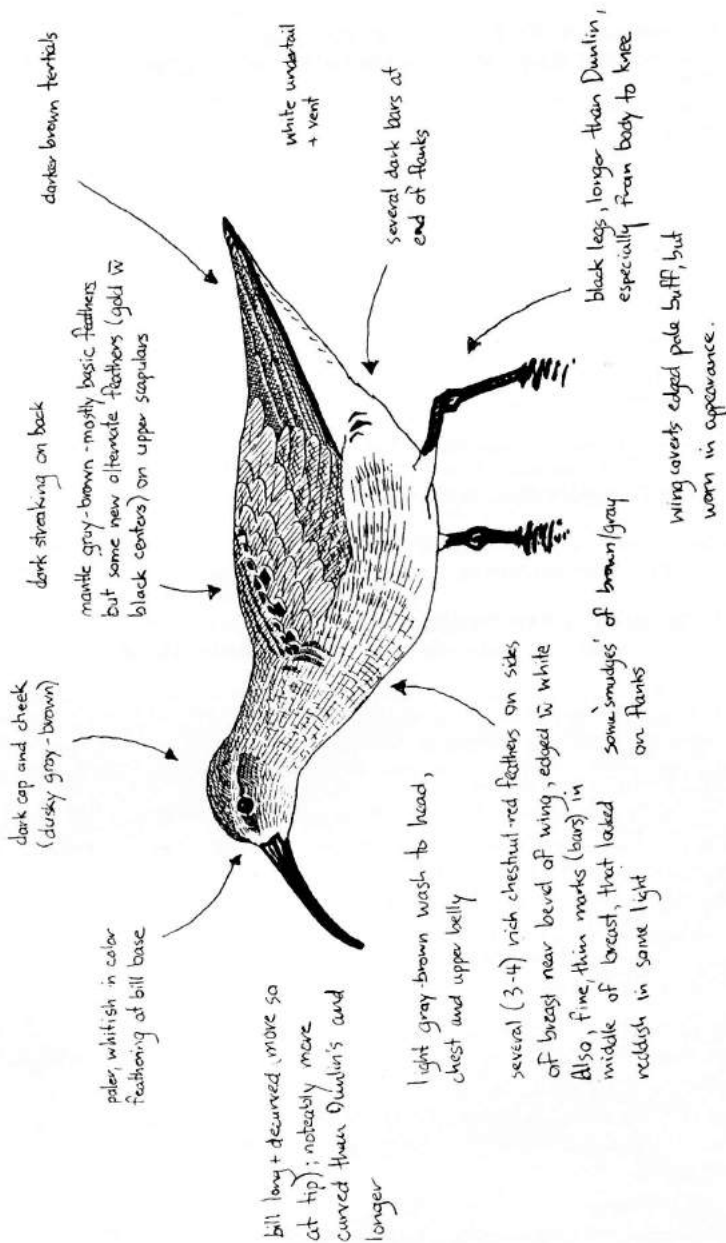


Figure 5: Curlew Sandpiper at Harmony Pond, Oshawa, Durham from 30 May to 3 June 1993. Drawing by Peter Burke.

**Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) (0/1)**

1993 — one, winter plumage *perdix*, 11-30 October, Cornwall Dam, Stormont (Bruce Di Labio, Kayo Roy, David Sibley) - photo on file.

This was an exciting find, a first for both Ontario and New York State as it bobbed about on the St. Lawrence River. The bird could often be approached fairly closely by boat, and field marks suggested that it was of the Asiatic subspecies, *B. m. perdix*. All previous 13 records from interior and eastern North America have been of this subspecies; the Pacific coast race *B. m. marmoratus* has never been recorded more than 75 km inland. Studies of the DNA and breeding habits of these two forms may indicate that they are in fact full species (Sibley 1993).

**White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) (2/2)**

1993 — one, 18 September, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).

The date and location of this observation would strongly suggest a wild origin for this bird, rather than a cage-bird escape. It is only the fourth record for Ontario.

**Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) (\*/3)**

1993 — one male, 22 May, Burpee Twp., *Manitoulin* (Ron Ridout, Ron Tasker) - audiotape on file.

This singing male appeared to have returned to its territory of the previous year.

**Dusky Flycatcher (*Empidonax oberholseri*) (0/1)**

1993 — one immature, 12 September, Porphyry Island, *Thunder Bay*. Specimen: ROM # 157852.

Another addition to the Ontario checklist, this bird was netted in a weakened condition and died the following day. Identification was confirmed by Ross D. James and W. Earl Godfrey.

**Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*) (0/2)**

1993 — one, 7 June, Point Pelee N.P., *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

What a year for flycatchers in Ontario! This was only the second record for the province - the first (not yet reviewed by the OBRC) was a bird banded at Toronto Island in 1981, photographed, and one outer tail feather with its distinctive white outer web removed as confirmation before the bird was released (James 1991).

**Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) (1/4)**

1993 — one adult, 16 September, Crooks Twp., *Thunder Bay* (Susan and Mike Bryan) - photos on file.

**Variegated Flycatcher (*Empidonomus varius*) (0/1)**

1993 — one, 7 October - 6 November, Centre Island, *Metropolitan Toronto* (David and Jaye Houle, Jim Coey, Brian Henshaw, Ron Tasker) - photos on file.

The star of the year! A first for Canada, and only the fourth record for North America (Houle and Houle 1993), this obliging bird was seen by hundreds of birders from across the continent during its extended stay.

**Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (8/45)**

1993 — one, 11 June, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Dave Shepherd).

— one adult, 12 June, Heron Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Douglas Tate).

— one, 27 June, Rutherglen, *Nipissing* (Richard D. Tafel).

1992 — one, 24 May, Sibley P.P., *Thunder Bay* (Susan Bryan).

— one immature, 13 October, Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington).

1988 — one adult, 3-6 June, Worthington Twp., *Rainy River* (Nancy L. Barrett, Geoff Carpentier, Dave Elder) - photos on file.

The 1988 bird was one of a pair using the same nest site as in 1987 and 1989; in 1991, a pair nested in a Rainy River backyard instead (*vide* Dave Elder).

The October 1992 record was by far the latest Western Kingbird ever recorded in northern Ontario, by about a month (*vide* Alan Wormington).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) (3/24)**

1993 — one, 12 May, Stanhope Twp., Haliburton (Robert Pollard).

— one, 13 June, Prairie River, Thunder Bay (Frank Leppanen) - photo on file.

— one adult, 15 August - 24 September, Wheatley, Kent (Jim Coey; found by Alan Wormington).

These beautiful flycatchers were quite outshone by their rarer congeners this year.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) (0/1)**

1993 — one adult, 29 and 30 September, Cayuga, Haldimand-Norfolk (John Miles, Kayo Roy; found by John Dickie Jr.) - photos on file.

Many birders were disappointed by the short, midweek stay of this spectacular bird. Amazingly, it was found in the same farmyard that a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher had frequented some 15 years previously. It allowed quite close approach, resulting in many stunning photographs. This was only the second record for Ontario, the first being seen in Dorion, Thunder Bay in 1977 (James 1991).

**Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) (7/11)**

1993 — one immature *leucorhoa*, 20-27 September, Barrie Island Causeway, Manitoulin (John Lemon, Terry Osborne; found by Monty Brigham) - photos on file.

Although this bird is a rare transient throughout the province, mainly in the fall, this was the first record for the Manitoulin-Sudbury area.

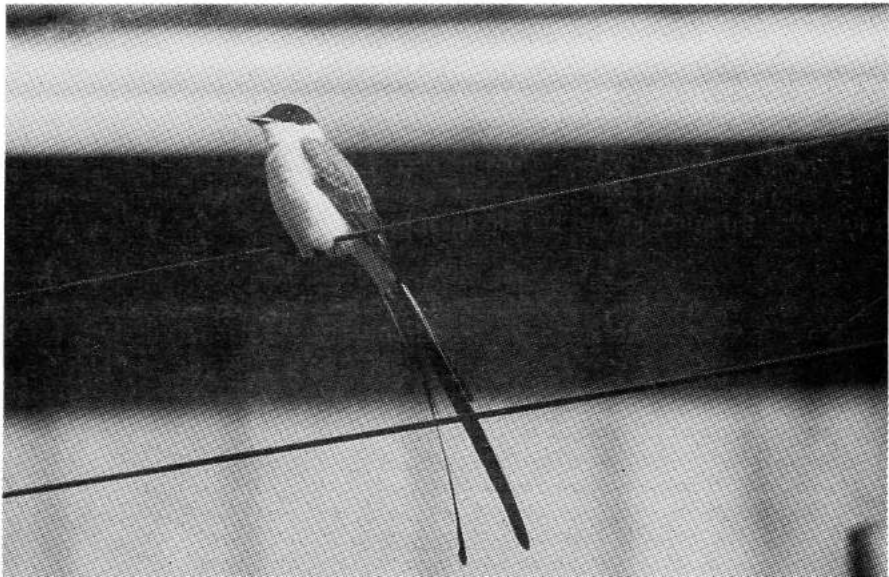


Figure 6: Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Cayuga, Haldimand-Norfolk on 30 September 1993. Photo by Nancy L. Barrett.

**Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) (2/9)**

1993 — one adult male, 3-13 April, Port Rowan, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Doug McRae; found by Ian Platt) - photos on file.

**Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) (4/21)**

1993 — one, 17 January - 26 March, Lakehead University, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott; found by John Woodcock) - photo on file.

1992 — one adult, 28 November, *Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay* (Susan Bryan).

— one, 29 November 1992 - 31 March 1993, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Don Peuramaki; found by George Fairfield).

— one, 5 December, *Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).

It was considered probable that the three birds at *Thunder Bay* were three different individuals, especially as Minnesota had an invasion of Townsend's Solitaires in the winter of 1992/93.

**Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (5/45)**

1993 — one adult female, 18 December 1993 - 11 January 1994, Rosedale, *Victoria* (Margaret Bain; found by Russ and Andrea Thompson).

1992 — one, 12 October, Temagami, *Nipissing* (Sloan Watters).

— one adult male, 13 December, Kaministiquia, *Thunder Bay* (Joy and Richard Lipowski, Nicholas G. Escott) - photos on file.

— one female, 30 December 1992 - 13 January 1993, *Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott; found by Pat Kuper) - photo on file.

Although there may well be as many or even more Varied Thrushes in northern Ontario than in the south of the province, birders in the north are few and far between, and the total number of their reports does not reach the OBRC threshold whereas it easily does so in the much more heavily birded south. This species is therefore removed from the Review List for southern Ontario.

**Lawrence's Warbler (*Vermivora pinus* x *V. chrysoptera*) (\* /4)**

1993 — one male, 10 and 11 May, Lambton Woods, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Tom Cosburn).

— one adult female, 11 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Agro, Brian Henshaw; found by Alan Conlin) - photo on file.

The bird in Lambton Woods was singing an apparently typical Blue-winged Warbler (*V. pinus*) song.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*) (4/7)**

1992 — one, 7 September, Point Pelee N.P., *Essex* (Carolyn Pomarius, Calvin W. Pomarius, William C. D'Anna).

**Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) (17/57)**

1993 — one adult male *albiflora*, 13-15 May, Thickson's Woods, *Durham* (Margaret Bain).

— one adult male, 17 May, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Ron Tasker).

— one male *albiflora*, 23 June, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Peter Burke; found by Dawn M. Brenner).

— one *dominica*, 12 November - 4 December, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (Edward Czerwinski; found by Eileen Fallon) - photo on file.

1992 — one immature, 20 April, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).

— one immature, 28 April - 6 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).

— one, 12-16 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior, Rinchen Boardman) - photo on file.

— one immature, 13-18 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).

With the recent remarkable increase in sightings of this southern warbler, it easily meets the criteria for delisting in the south, but remains on the Review List for nor-



Figure 7: Adult female Lawrence's Warbler at Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* on 11 May 1993. Photo by *Brian Henshaw*.

thern Ontario. It was interesting to note that the first record for the Sault Ste. Marie area was of the less expected, yellow-lored subspecies, *D. d. dominica*. The photograph was examined by Kenneth C. Parkes of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburg, who pointed out additional field marks, including the finer flank streaking characteristic of this race.

#### **Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) (1/3)**

1993 — one male, 6 May, Tremblay Beach C.A., *Essex* (Erwin Meissner).

This is the fourth record for Ontario. True to its secretive nature, the distinctive, loud and repeated song was its main feature as the bird gave brief views from dense cover.

#### **Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) (2/8)**

1992 — one female, 5-8 December, Port Colborne, *Niagara* (Nancy Barrett, Kayo Roy; found by Margaret Cunningham) - photos on file.

This bird was fed on mealworms by the homeowner and eventually trapped and shipped out to the west coast.

#### **Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) (2/3)**

1993 — one adult male, 6 May, Warsaw, *Peterborough* (John Nighswander, Doug Sadler) - photo and video on file.

1986 — one adult male, 29 April - 1 May, Arva, *Middlesex* (Alan W. McTavish; found by Robert Packer) - photo on file.

1978 — one, 21-23 May, Long Point, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Erica Nol, Warren Russell).

— one female, December 1978 - January 1979 (exact dates not on record), Toronto Island, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Mark Ferguson) - photo on file.

At the OBRC Policy meeting in November 1993, Bob Curry presented a summary of his research into extralimital records of Painted Buntings. The consensus was that if these birds were escaping from captivity, they would be turning up all over North America, and not mostly in the eastern states. It is also no longer legal to keep Painted Buntings in captivity. The Committee therefore decided that henceforth, Ontario records of Painted Bunting should be accepted unless there is definite evidence making the likelihood of an escape outweigh the probability of wild status. The species was first added to the Ontario checklist in 1992 (Ontario Birds 10: 43-63).

The brilliant male at a Warsaw feeder showed every detail of its plumage on a home video, but unfortunately only stayed one day. The three earlier records had been placed in the Deferred category, but were reviewed and accepted.

**Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) North Only (1/5)**

1993 — one adult male, 25 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Keith Johnson, John Woronkewych).

**Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) North Only (2/6)**

1992 — one adult male *erythrophthalmus*, 9-13 November, Kaministiquia, *Thunder Bay* (Val Guenther, Jean Lister) - photo on file.

The photograph allows identification of the bird as of the nominate race, which is found in Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

**Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) (4/30)**

1992 — one, 5 December 1992 - 22 March 1993, Guelph, *Wellington* (Leslie Lougheed).

During its prolonged stay, this bird visited several feeders in an older residential neighbourhood in the north end of the city, so was often frustratingly difficult to find on any given day.



Figure 8: Female Western Tanager at Port Colborne, *Niagara* on 6 December 1992. Photo by Kayo Roy.

**Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) (3/15)**

- 1993 — one adult male, 5 June, Kingston, *Frontenac* (Ada Valkris).  
 — one adult male, 12 June, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (Greg Sadowski).  
 — one male, 29 June, Point Pelee N.P., *Essex* (Alan Wormington).

This was an excellent season for sightings of this scarce visitor from the prairies.

**Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) South Only (3/19)**

- 1992 — one, 16 May, Rondeau P.P., *Kent* (Raymond M. Seng, Dee Tata).  
 1991 — one winter adult, 25 December 1991 - 29 February 1992, Caledon, *Peel* (David Milsom) - photo on file.

**House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) North Only (0/3)**

- 1993 — one female, 27 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Matthew L. Holder) - photo on file.

This bird was a first for the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory.

## Historical Records

These are records occurring before 1981, which have been previously published, but which do not meet current documentation requirements.

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

- 1966 — one, 17-20 May, Hamilton Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Bob Curry; found by George W. North).

**Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) (1/7)**

- 1975 — one, second week of May for three days, Sarnia, *Lambton* (Gerry Clements).

## Deferred Records

### Identification accepted, wild status deferred

Records in this category are those where wild status is currently debatable, and a decision has therefore been deferred until more information can be assembled.

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)**

- 1993 — nine adults, 17 June - 7 July, Rayside, Balfour, *Sudbury* (Fred Marshall, Nancy Barrett, John Lemon, Charles T. Whitelaw, Alan Wormington) - photos on file.

A decision on origin was deferred pending further study of extralimital occurrences.



## 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 at any time should new information arise suggesting a wild origin.

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

1992 — one adult male, 29 November - 5 December, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Carl Cooper) - photo on file.

## 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.

- 1993 — Greater White-fronted Goose, 26 November - 4 December, Adelaide Twp., *Middlesex*.  
 — Pomarine Jaeger, three, 25 October, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth*.  
 — Long-tailed Jaeger, 24 September, Wheatley Harbour, *Kent*.  
 — Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*), 23 May, Presqu'île P.P., *Northumberland*.  
 1992 — Swainson's Hawk, 25 September, Holiday Beach, *Essex*.  
 — Swainson's Hawk, 29 November, Clarksburg, *Grey*.  
 — Gyrfalcon, 14 December, Floradale, *Waterloo*.  
 — Long-tailed Jaeger, 1 September, McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, *Durham*.  
 1989 — Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), 20 May, Humber Bay, *Peel*.

## Corrections/Updates to Previous OBRC Reports

#### 1992 Report (*Ontario Birds* 11: 46-63)

- under American White Pelican (1992) add: "15 April" to the date and "Mark Jennings" as an independent finder on that date, at the same location.
- under Slaty-backed Gull, replace "1991" with "1992".
- under Atlantic Puffin, replace "west of Cochrane" with "east of Cochrane".

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

- under Mississippi Kite (1991), extend the dates of occurrence to 21 May, and split the record into two occurrences as follows: (1) one adult, 17-18 May, Point Pelee N.P., *Essex* (Graham P. Catley, Andy C. Sims, Terry Osborne, Moss Taylor) - photo on file; and (2) one first year subadult, 19-21 May, Point Pelee N.P. *Essex* (Ken W. Thorpe).
- under Swainson's Warbler, replace summary number "1/0/1" with "1/1/1".

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

— under Mississippi Kite (1984) change "Strabane" to "Westover", *Hamilton-Wentworth*.

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

— under Mississippi Kite, add "first year subadult" to the record as the age of the bird.

**Acknowledgements**

The OBRC would like to thank the many observers who took the time to compile and submit reports and photographs in 1993. We are especially grateful to those who helped to obtain reports that were not their own, or gave the Committee information on dates of occurrence, or acted as expert opinions in cases of difficult identification problems; they include Allen Chartier, W. Earl Godfrey, Steve LaForest, Paul Lehman, John Lemon, Doug McRae, Kenneth Parkes, Paul Pratt, Keith Reynolds, Kayo Roy, Will Russell, and Alan Wormington.

Many thanks to Ron Ridout for continuing to forward the relevant observations from the *American Birds* Seasonal Summaries, which are most useful in following up reportable species. Bob Curry again most kindly prepared the summary numbers accompanying the records. My sincere thanks go to Committee Chairman, Ron Pittaway, for his patient encouragement and advice throughout the year. Thanks also to all the members of the 1993 Committee for their prompt processing of the report packages, and for reviewing the first draft of this article. We must also thank Bob Finlayson yet again for ably handling the slides and prints illustrating this Report.

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