

Purple Gallinule *Porphyryla martinica*

There have been 4 records, all of adult individuals: on 7 July 1965 (CB, NB), 11 August 1967 (CB, NB), 11 June 1971, far from water (WS and John Shaw), and 21 July 1978 (IM).

Common Gallinule *Gallinula chloropus* (P; AMNH)

Individuals occurred on 11 September 1964, 19 August 1966, 26 May 1968, 3-5 November 1968, 14 June 1973, 15 November 1977, and 31 August 1979. The specimen on 5 October 1896 appears to be a provincial first, and Bouteillier (1908a) reported individuals on 13 October and 22 November 1906.

American Coot *Fulica americana* (P)

The species has become regular in fall (Table III), as in the province in general. Two on 1-2 July 1969 (CB) were unseasonable. Richard Bouteillier reported (Piers MS) a bird shot "last year, in hole in ice" (i.e. in 1900).

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* (P; AMNH, ROM, SMS)

This is a summer resident, and late-spring and early-fall migrants are not easily discernable (Table III). However, Burton (1974) believed that first fall migrants in 1970-1971 arrived in mid-July and that the species peaked in numbers during 15-25 August. An early spring bird in 1972 (Table VII) was part of that season's abnormally early flight of shorebirds. It is noteworthy that the Bouteilliers recorded the bird consistently earlier than our usual arrival dates (cf. Tables III, IV). Dwight (1895) found it "breeding abundantly", and it is rated as a "very common" breeding species in the Piers MS. It has certainly decreased as a nesting species since. Total island populations were estimated as: 12 pairs in 1970, 6-7 pairs in 1971, 4 pairs in 1974, and 5 pairs in 1977 and 1979. Incomplete clutches have been found, of 3 on 21 June 1963, 2 on 8 June 1966, and 1 on 24 June 1978. Hatching or newly hatched young were seen on 2 July 1967, 16 June 1971, and 5 July 1977, and newly fledged birds were seen on 21 July 1978.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* (AMNH, ROM, SMS)

The bird nested at the turn of the century, but its abundance then is difficult to assess. Richard Bouteillier (Piers MS) thought it "uncommon", but they were reported as "in numbers" on 29 May 1904 (Bouteillier 1905). Dwight (1895) stated that "they are outnumbered by the Semipalmated Plover perhaps a hundred fold, but they are moderately abundant". What is certain is that they have suffered the decline shown by the species throughout its eastern range (Cairns & McLaren 1980). Elliot (in litt. 1948 to H.F. Lewis, Chief, Dominion Wildlife Service) searched for but could not find them in early August 1948, and Erskine (1953) was uncertain about their presence. The last known nest was found by CB on 15 June 1964, hatching shortly before 10 July. Otherwise it has since become an uncommon transient (Table III), and none has been seen in spring since 1969. One extraordinary bird was closely studied by CB on 25 January 1967 (not in Table III); there are no other winter records for the province. Dwight (1895) believed that the breeding birds of the island were referable to the more western race, *C. m. circumcinctus*, a view echoed from their examinations of specimens by Macoun (1899) and Saunders (1902), but not entertained by modern workers (e.g. Godfrey 1966).

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia* (P)

An individual on 2 April 1972 (Fig 6) was part of an extraordinary early flight of shorebirds that year (Table VII). It was perhaps the first well-substantiated record for the province, earlier specimens (Tufts 1973) probably not now extant.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* (P; AMNH)

Transient individuals and small groups occurred regularly (Table III). However, the bird is not a "normal" migrant on the island, for most spring birds arrived in May, long after the usual time of arrival in southern Canada. It was almost equally regular in each of the 3 autumn months—September, October and November. A resident pair from 5 May to 27 June 1968 was at times agitated, but no nest was found. Two birds next year stayed through much of May, but only 1 remained from 21 May to 13 June. One between 29 June and 5 July 1969 is considered, somewhat arbitrarily, to have been between seasons (not in Table III). Others arrived in early to mid-July in several years. One appearing first on 29 December 1968 and staying until 14 January 1969, and others on 13 January 1964, 24 January 1967, 4 February 1968, 18 February 1971, and 7 March 1977 (none in Table III) may have been attempting to escape worsening conditions on the nearby mainland, where they sometimes winter. One on 2 January 1903, listed by James Bouteillier, was also noteworthy.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* (P)

Spring records of 7 on 14 June 1965, 2 on 28 May 1966, and 1 on 16 June 1967 were unusual for Nova Scotia, although its regularity and abundance in fall are as expected (Table III). Large counts of 300 on 3 September 1969, 200 on 10 September 1974, and 220 on 2 September 1978 occurred on days with unsettled, frontal weather.

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* (P)

It was regular, but scarce, in spring, and abundant in fall (Table III), with counts frequently exceeding 100 between late August and early October (ca. 1000 on 3 September 1969, 2000 during 20-25 August 1974). Burton (1974) indicates that young birds arrived in mid-August 1970-1971, some 3 weeks after the first adults, and that young birds stayed on average 13 days, adults ca. 20 days.

Common Snipe *Capella gallinago* (P; AMNH, NMC)

Spring arrival was late in most years (Table III). At least 1 winnowing male and occasionally an apparent female were seen repeatedly in early summer 1968, and flying young that year on 14 July were certainly local (IM). Vieth (1907) noted its presence in summer 1866, and stated that "some of these birds breed there". The numbers reported by the Bouteilliers in early July (Table IV) might also suggest local residency, but Richard (Piers MS) thought it did not breed. Two during 2-10 July 1976 (not in Table III) appeared to be merely unseasonable transients. One bird appeared on 25 December 1969, and a surprising twosome was found probing in deep snow near West Light on 8 January 1970, only 1 remaining next day (not in Table III).

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* (P)

An individual in early April 1972 was among several early shorebirds that year (Table VII). In most years birds lingered in June (Table III), and these along with birds arriving routinely in very early July may have been summering in the region. It was similarly early at the turn of the century (Table IV). Although Rosebrugh (1932), who lived there in 1916, included "yellowlegs" among the birds that used the island as a "summer breeding ground", this reference is casual and unsupported. Richard Bouteillier (Piers MS) stated that it "does not breed". The species is common around all ponds in fall migration. Burton (1974) believed that it was most abundant in early September with the arrival of young birds.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (P)

It was occasional in spring (Table III), but one in 1972 was most unusual (Table VII). James Bouteillier listed 2 on 5 July 1902, earlier than any recent ones. Large groups of 50-90 birds occurred several times between early August and early October. Burton (1974) concluded that in 1970 peak numbers of adults occurred in the second half of August, and of immatures in the first half of September.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* (AMNH, NMC)

The bird was more regular in spring than it is on the mainland (Table III), and the bird on 28 April 1978 (AR) is the earliest (although probably "normal") for the province, apart from one listed for 25 March 1903 by James Bouteillier. This record is interesting, in view of the migratory seasons of smaller species of Old-World *Tringa*. It was regular in fall (Table III), but counts of 6 on 27 August 1969 and 9 on 27 August 1970 were exceptional. The bird on 16 November 1969 (CB) is the latest on record for the province.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* (P; AMNH)

Spring arrivals were late by mainland standards (Table III), except for an abnormally early one in 1972 (Table VII). The only substantial count was of 13 on 8 May 1967. A few appeared and lingered in June, but no breeding behavior was evident. It is noteworthy that 21 of 31 fall birds seen since 1966 have appeared after 31 August. Two on 21 December 1972 (P. Dunning) were unprecedented in the province (not in Table III). One on 30 August 1969 was identified by sight by DWF as one of the large, pale *C. s. inornatus*. This western race has subsequently been seen elsewhere, and collected in the province, and it may be that most late Willets are western, as they are in New England. The bird on 2 April 1972 (Fig 7) appeared to be of this race, vagrant at this season. As expected, the specimen in the Dwight collection taken on 16 May 1902 is *C. s. semipalmatus*. Two on 21 May 1902 were "the first ever noted", and it was not listed subsequently. Bent (1927) has it as breeding on Sable Island, but this probably represents confusion with Cape Sable Island, Shelburne Co.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* (P; AMNH)

The species nests, but either arrived late or was overlooked most springs until late May or June (Table III). The Bouteilliers gave somewhat earlier arrival dates (Table IV). Total island counts in recent years during June were ca. 12 pairs in 1970, 15-16 in 1971, 6 in 1974, 5 in 1977, 4 in 1978, and 6 in 1979; it cannot be rated as common now. Dwight (1895) listed it as the least common of the island's breeding birds, whereas Richard Bouteillier (Piers MS) thought it "rather common" and Saunders (1902) "quite common". The nesting season can be delimited by the following: an incomplete clutch of 3 on 21 June 1965, a brood hatching on 8 July 1968, and recently hatched chicks on 13 July 1975 and 6 July 1976. Probable migrants were banded as early as 3 August 1970 by Burton (1974), and maximum fall counts seldom exceeded 10 birds.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (P; SMS)

It was scarce in spring (Table III), but there were counts of 50 or more as early as in the latter half of August, in agreement with the peak noted by Burton (1974) in 1970. Individuals were observed (IM et al.) eating putrid flesh of beached Pilot Whales in early September 1973. Two on 21 January 1979 (AR) are among the few winter records for the province.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (P; AMNH)

Spring records are unusual for the province (Table III), and a bird in early April (Fig 7; Table VII) was more so. It was not common in fall (Table III), with a

maximum count of 25 on 20 August 1977. A flock of ca. 100 on 30 January 1978 was carefully studied by WS; there are a few winter records for the province, but never in such numbers.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* (AMNH)

Although the island does not offer its usual habitat, up to 6 migrants were seen near West Light between 7 September and 1 October 1976 (AL, AR), and 6 winter birds were on the beach on 23 February 1971 (DW). The specimen in the Dwight collection is dated 26 February 1903.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (P; AMNH)

The spring records are unusual (Table III), and the very early bird was unprecedented (Table VII). It was regular in autumn (Table III), with large counts of 60 on 29 September 1970 and 30 on 17 October 1975. The Bouteilliers found it regularly (Table IV).

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* (P; AMNH)

This species was occasional in spring and abundant in fall migration (Table III). Two on 11 July 1965 were early fall migrants. Burton (1974) found that adults arrived before young birds, and peaked in late August to mid-September. Counts of 100-500 were made during 5 years of 1967-1979, between 20 August and 13 September. The Bouteilliers also listed it often (Table IV).

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* (P)

The bird is a scarce fall migrant, as in the province in general (Table III). There are no records from earlier times.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* (P; AMNH, ROM, SMS)

The species nests here and there on the Nova Scotia mainland, and commonly on the island (Fig 8). An exceptionally early bird (Table VII) and 1 on 25 April 1971 (Table III) are respectively earliest and second earliest spring records for the province. Burton (1974) believed that first fall migrants of non-island adults arrived in mid-July 1970, and immatures mostly 2 weeks later. Up to 200 were present in early September 1969, and 125 on 23 August 1978. Nesting was noted by Gilpin and described concretely by Dwight (1895). Recent population estimates on the whole island in June were 103 in 1970 and 167 in 1971, the latter based on thorough surveys. An effort was made to find and monitor nests in 1970. Clutches were complete on 28 May, 30 May, 4 June (3 nests), and 5 June. Incubation times (first laid to last hatching) were 19, 20 (3 nests), and 21 days. Eight of the 10 nests produced young. Much more extensive studies were made by Miller (1977, 1978, 1979) in 1975-1976, as outlined under Recent Research on Birds.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Five individual birds have offered ample opportunity for study: on 26 January 1968 (CB), on 26 July and 10 August 1968 (believed different birds by CB), on 22 November 1970 (DW), and on 24 August 1978 (G. Yaki, IM et al.). There has been an equal number of sightings of this Old World species elsewhere in the province.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The bird has been rare in spring (with 1 on 8 May 1964 in addition to that in Table III) and surprisingly uncommon in fall.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* (P; AMNH)

The bird is occasional in spring and abundant in fall migration (Table III), birds in late June and early July possibly representing nonbreeders. The bird on 3 May 1976 is an early record for the province. Estimates of 200-1000 birds were made

during 7 years of 1967-1979, between 20 August and 2 October. Burton (1974) concluded that adults were most common during the first half of August and immatures in the first half of September 1970-1971.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* (P; UM)

A specimen collected by JBu on 9 September 1970 (Ouellet et al. 1973) was the first authenticated record from Nova Scotia. At least some of a large group (80+) of small "peep" on the flooded south beach on 23 December 1963 were thought by CB and NB to be this species (long, drooping bills and rusty scapulars on some). A well-marked bird was seen on 15 September 1973 (Fig 9). A specimen labelled *mauri* in the Dwight collection has been properly relabelled *pusillus* by a subsequent examiner.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* (P; UM)

The species is an abundant migrant (Table III) and regular winter resident. Winter counts made during extensive travel on beaches in January-February of 6 years ranged between 25 and 40. There were no records between late February and late March, so spring arrivals (Table III) were detectable; Bouteillier (1905) reported "a flock" on 4 March 1904. They were most abundant in autumn with an estimated 1100 on the entire island on 15 October 1971.

Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus* (P; AMNH)

The spring record (Table III) is unusual, but it is more regular, although rare, in fall. A bird on 30 June 1966 was somewhat early. The specimen described by Dwight (1903) as a first provincial record was taken on 18 August 1902.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (P)

A female was closely observed on 15 August 1965 (CB, NB); a drab male was photographed on 29-30 May 1975 (DWF); and at least 4 occurred in summer 1978 (IM, HR et al.): an adult male and a female during 19-25 July, a female on 23 August, and a young male on 1-2 September.

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda* (P; AMNH)

This species, which has not yet nested in the province, was evidently first collected (no date given) in Nova Scotia on Sable Island (Gilpin 1882). A bird taken on 1 May 1902 (reported on James Bouteillier's list, dated 2 days earlier) is in the Dwight collection, and others were observed by Bouteillier (1906) and by Erskine (1953), who expressed reservations. In recent years, individuals have occurred on 31 May 1965 and 5 June 1966, and regularly since 1966 (Table III), often lingering on the island for days in spring. The bird on 26 April 1969 (which stayed until 7 May) is the earliest on record from the province.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

Records by the Bouteilliers (1901; 1906) on 2 September 1901 ("numerous") and 12 September 1905 (1 bird) are the first records for the province, apart from vague references in Gilpin (1882). It is rare in fall, but probably more regular than Table III suggests. The bird closely observed in the dunes on 20 May 1978 (IM) was the second spring record from the province.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (P; AMNH, SMS)

The spring records on Table III, as well as 2 on 11 May 1966 and 1 on 10 June 1907 (Bouteillier 1908b), are unusual for Nova Scotia, and an early bird in 1972 (Table VII) was quite abnormal. In August and early September, groups of 25 or more have been seen resting at bases of dunes along the south beach. In addition to the 3 autumn specimens in the Dwight collection, there is a bird of the Old-World race, *N. p. islandicus*, taken at sea 100 km south of the island on 23 May 1906 (Brewster 1909).

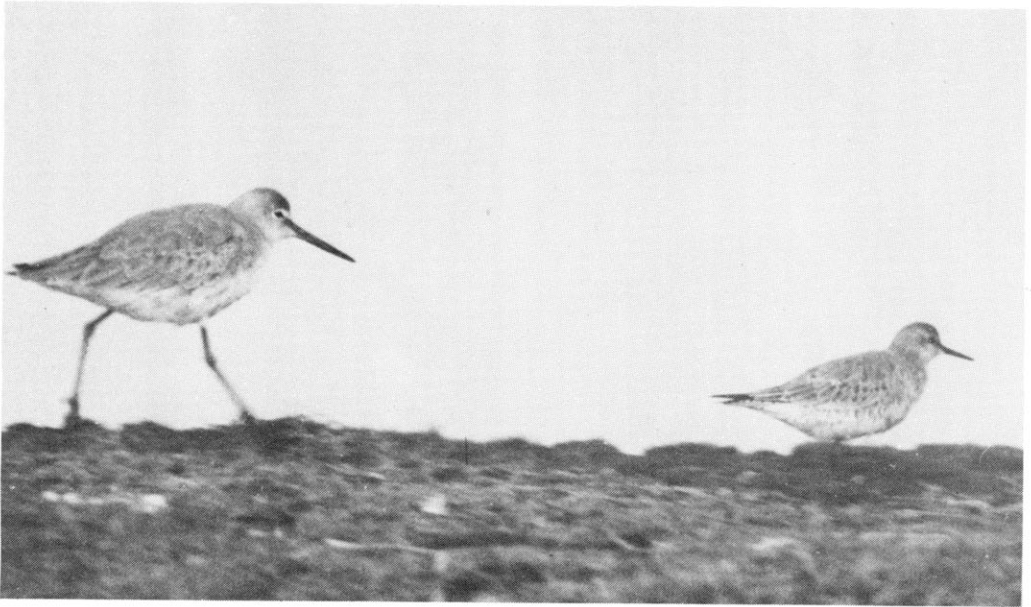


Fig 7 A Willet and a Red Knot were among the abnormally early shorebirds on the island in 1972. The pale, long-billed, long-legged appearance of the Willet strongly suggest that it was a vagrant individual of the prairie race. (Photo: 2 April 1972, D. Welsh.)



Fig 8 A Least Sandpiper nesting near West Light. (Photo: early June 1968, I. McLaren.)

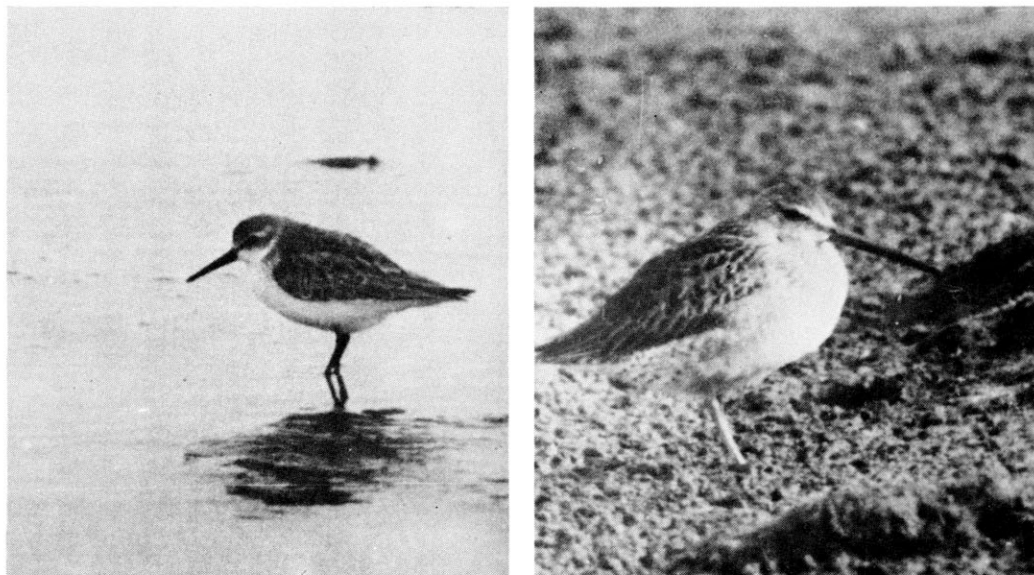


Fig 9 Well-marked individuals of the Western Sandpiper (left) and Long-billed Dowitcher (right) were found near Old No. 3 Station. Earlier specimen records of these 2 species were the first from Nova Scotia. (Photos: left, 15 September 1973, D. Welsh; right, 13 September 1973, I. McLaren.)

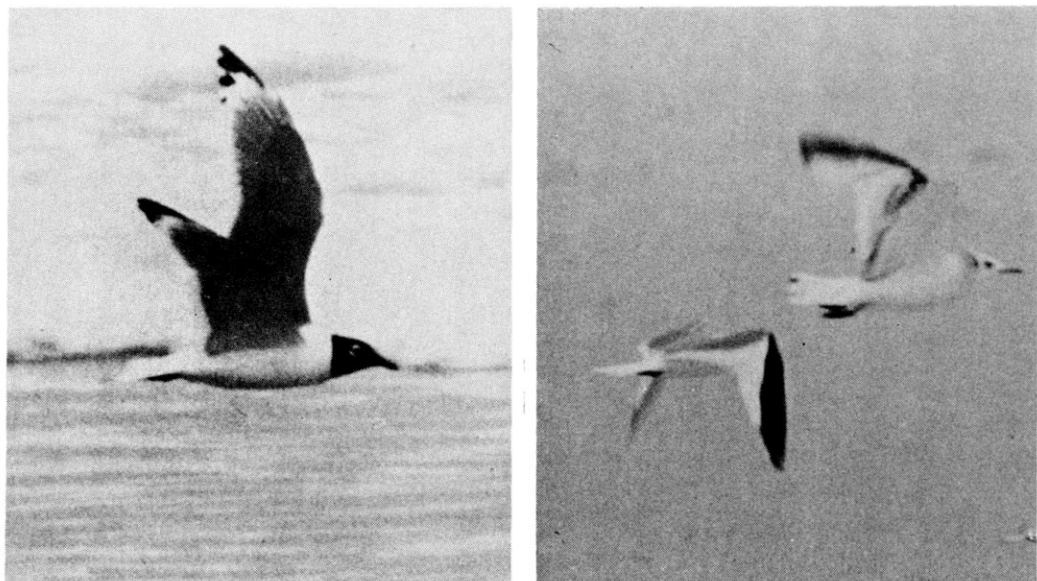


Fig 10 The Franklin's Gull (left), far from its prairie nesting range, was a first provincial record. The Sabine's Gull (right), conspicuous among Kittiwakes at the island's west tip, was a first authenticated record. (Photos: left, 26 May 1973, J. Boulva; right, 12 June 1977, I. McLaren.)

Eskimo Curlew *Numenius borealis* (AMNH)

What seems to be the last Nova Scotian record is a specimen (a head only) labelled "? fall of 1902" in the Dwight collection. The query may mean that the fragmentary specimen was found as such and attributed to a fall arrival. The specimen is referred to by Swenk (1915).

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa* (P)

One was feeding among other shorebirds on the south beach on 12-13 September 1972 (IM et al.), and another was carefully studied on the extraordinary date of 8 June 1979 (B. Mactavish; Z. Lucas).

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* (P)

The bird probably occurs more regularly in fall than Table III suggests. In addition, a bird on 6 June 1965 (black wing linings noted by CB, NB) was evidently the first spring record for the province (an unidentified godwit was seen by AR on 11 April 1975).

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* (P)

Dowitchers are regular in spring and abundant in fall (Table III). A bird in 1972 was clearly abnormally early (Table VII), and otherwise the bird on 3 May 1976 (Table III) is an early record for the province. The bird on 29 June 1971, 2 weeks later than any other June bird, was assumed to be an early fall migrant (Table III). Burton (1974) found that adults appeared on 13 July 1971 and peaked later in the month, whereas immatures appeared in late July, and did not peak until late August and early September.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* (P; AMNH)

The specimen in the Dwight collection was a first provincial record (Pitelka 1950). The date on the label is 4 October 1897, not 31 October as given by Pitelka and others since. In addition, several have been carefully identified in recent years: 2 on 2 October 1970 (DW), up to 5 on 13-15 September 1973 (e.g. Fig 9), 2 on 12 September 1974 (B. Mactavish), 1 on 13 September 1977 (IM), 3 on 26 August (Arnet Sheppard) and 1 on 10 September 1978 (IM et al.).

American Woodcock *Philohela minor* (P)

A few Woodcock have occurred beginning in 1970 (Table III). Numerous probe marks in the wormless sand on 4 April 1972 bespoke some frustration.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

A single bird on 17 September 1969 (CB, NB) followed by about 3 weeks the first record for the province, on the mainland.

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* (P; AMNH, NSMS, ROM)

Although it is probably regular around the island, it has been seen in spring 1967-1979 only between 18 May and 5 June, usually in ones and twos. However, on 29 May 1977, flocks of 50-300 passed in numbers over the island in a southeasterly direction; an estimated 16,000 birds passed within visible range that morning. The Bouteilliers recorded it regularly (Table IV) in large numbers ("doz. of flocks of abt. 50 to 100 each") on 21 May 1906. It was also reported on 3 July 1902, and the 11 specimens in the Dwight collection include 7 taken on 13 July 1894. The only recent fall migrants were 3 on ponds during 26 August to 15 September 1977.

Wilson's Phalarope *Steganopus tricolor* (P)

The sight record of a bird on 7 June 1905 (Bouteillier 1906) is evidently the first for the province. Two were seen on 31 October 1966, and it has been sufficiently common since to be entered in Table III.

Northern Phalarope *Lobipes lobatus* (P; AMNH, UM)

Since 1966 there have been only 3 individuals during 3 springs (23 May - 14 June) and about 20 fall migrants during 4 years (20 August - 27 September). Bouteillier (1908b) reported an earlier spring bird on 13 May 1907 and there is a late specimen in the Dwight collection from 4 October 1902.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Although Brown et al. (1975) indicate that this is the commonest jaeger in waters near the island, only 8 individuals have been identified on the island: 5 during 4 springs of 1967-1979, between 7 May and 2 June; 2 on 14-16 September 1977, and 1 on 3 September 1979. James Bouteillier listed "jaeger gulls" on 30 May 1902, and Richard (Piers MS) thought them "common out at sea".

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus* (P; AMNH)

The great majority of identified jaegers have been of this species. The earliest in spring was on 10 May 1971, and the latest were 3 on 16 September 1977. Totals by month since 1967, including some unidentified jaegers best attributed to this species, were: 43 in May, 62 in June, 6 in July, 9 in August, and 21 in September.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* (AMNH, SMS, Austr. Mus.)

Two adults were seen on the beach and in flight on 9 June 1968 (IM); a bird flew close overhead on 13 June 1977 (HR, S. McCormack), and 2 adults were seen along the beach on 4 June 1979 (B. Mactavish). The 6 immature birds in the Dwight collection were all taken on 15 August 1896 and are evidently the first of the species from Nova Scotia.

Great Skua *Catharacta skua* (P)

Skuas are regular around the island (Brown et al. 1975), and are occasionally seen from shore. Since 1970, 3 individuals have been seen in March, 9 in early June, 1 in early July, and 1 in mid-August. Only 6 of these birds have been identified with some assurance as Great Skuas, and recent occurrences of *C. macormicki* should be kept in mind. Richard Bouteillier (Piers MS) thought that Skuas were "common about the island", and they were listed as "skua gulls" for 7 June 1906 (misleadingly as "Gulls" in the published version) and as "squa gulls" for 18 July 1907.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* (P; AMNH)

Only some 27 individuals have been reported during 1967-1979. The earliest was in mid-September 1979 (WS), and the latest was on 31 May 1976 (IM). One of the 2 specimens in the Dwight collection is labelled "caught in trap . . . 25 February 1895", probably set for the infamous foxes of that time.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides* (P; AMNH, ROM)

Much more regular and abundant than the Glaucous Gull, this species was reported as early in fall as 23 September 1963. Up to 250 were found on the whole island in mid-February 1970, and again in late January and early April 1972. Sightings of 1-3 birds were made routinely into June; the median date of last sightings during 1967-1979 was 5 June, and the latest was on 24 June 1977. An injured year-old bird was found on 27 August 1974. The subspecies *kumlieni* certainly can be found commonly (3 specimens), and *glaucoides* (1 labelled as *leucopterus* by Dwight) is probably less frequent. During early April 1972, the less common white-primaried adults, which appeared rather more delicate in form, occurred mainly along the beaches, often with seal herds, whereas readily identified *kumlieni* were concentrated with other gulls at the island's tips (IM).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* (P; AMNH, NMC, NSMS)

An estimated 630 pairs nested on the island in 1970 (Lock 1973). Some whole-island estimates for other seasons were 1150-3500 individuals during September of 6 years, 2000 on 20 February 1971, and 400 on 19 January 1972. Few immature birds stay in winter. Early reports by island superintendents (Nova Scotia Archives) of exploitation of "gull eggs", when explicit, refer to "mackerel gulls" or "small gulls"—that is, to terns. There is no evidence that *Larus* gulls nested in the 19th century. At the turn of the century, they were thought (by Richard Bouteillier, in Piers MS) to be the more numerous of the 2 large gulls, but even then they did not nest (Dwight 1895; Saunders 1902a). They were probably present more commonly in winter, for James Bouteillier noted on 3 May 1902 that "about all the Great Black-backed Gulls, Grey Gulls [immatures?], and Herring Gulls are gone", but that "200 or more stay on the east and west bars during the summer". Rosebrugh (1932) states that gulls were breeding in 1916, but his list of breeding birds may be overly casual (e.g., see under Greater Yellowlegs). Lock (1973) thought that they began to breed around 1920. He studied their breeding biology intensively in 1969 and 1970. First nests occurred on 29 April 1969 and 1 May 1970, and peak of laying was during 10-15 May in both years. He concluded (see Recent Research on Birds) that they are quite successful on the island. Adults have been seen recently killing Harbor Seal pups. However, the situation is reversed during the winter breeding season of the island's Gray Seals, adult females of which have been seen killing or maiming numbers of black-backs in apparent defense of their pups (B. Beck, in verb.). In spring 1977 a die-off of perhaps hundreds of black-backs was attributed by residents to food poisoning from decaying flesh of large numbers of Pilot Whales, stranded in December 1976.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

An adult paused briefly near West Light on 5 September 1979, then flew westward off the island (ELM).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* (P; AMNH, NMC, NSMS)

An estimated 2000 pairs nested on the island in 1970 (Lock 1973). Some other estimates for the whole island were: 550-1000 during early to mid-September of 4 years, 300 on 24 October 1973, 400 in mid-November 1977, 500 in mid-January 1972, 200 in late February 1971, and 700 in early April 1972. Immatures are rare in winter, and in early spring 1972 were not seen during extensive travels until 10 April. As noted under the previous species, *Larus* gulls may not have nested until about 1920. Lock (1973; see also Recent Research on Birds) found seasonally first eggs on 8 May 1969 and 5 May 1970, with peaks of laying about 24 May and during 20-25 May during the 2 years. There was a peak of re-laying on 21 June 1970.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (NMC)

Two on 12 December 1963 and 2 on 17 November 1965 have been followed by sightings of only 20 during 1967-1979. Nine appeared in spring between 11 April and 12 June (1 unusually early on 8 March 1969), and 10 between 24 July and 28 December (an additional oiled bird stayed from 8 November 1968 to 31 January 1969). Richard Bouteillier gives the only older record, a bird on 3 November 1908. A recently fledged female, first seen on 13 August 1972 and found dead on 22 August, had quite heavily sheathed remiges and retrices and "was probably not sufficiently well developed . . . to travel very far" (W.E. Godfrey, in litt.), which poses a minor mystery.

Mew Gull *Larus canus*

On 9 March 1969, an adult was closely observed as it perched and flew around West Light (CB, NB), for a first provincial sighting. The Old-World *L. c. canus* would seem more probable at this season.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* (P)

Only 4 individuals have been noted: on 13 February 1970, 28 May 1974, 12-15 November 1977, and 30 May 1978. The May birds were somewhat late for the province.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* (P)

Large numbers appeared after a hurricane on 24 October 1968. There were still 100+ on 4 November, some dying, and a few until 12 November. Otherwise the bird has been regular in small numbers with records from 1967-1979 by month as follows: 6 in May, 10 in June, 3 in July, 4 in August, 1 in September, 4 in October, and 12 in November. A bird on 27 January 1972 (JB, DW) was among the few winter records from the province.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* (P)

An adult was seen regularly between 26 May and 2 June 1973 by JB (Fig 10), and a year-old bird was present between 23 August and 13 September 1978 (IM, G. Yaki et al.; photos). There are no other Nova Scotian records of this prairie gull.

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia* (AMNH)

The bird is irregular and rare, with individuals in recent years on 25 November 1969, 19 November 1970, 17 February 1971 (immature, well studied, DW), and 12 September 1972, and 2 birds on 23 August 1973. Erskine (1953) reported 1 in late August 1953. The fragmentary specimen in the Dwight collection is labelled "winter of 1898-99".

Little Gull *Larus minutus* (P)

Two Little Gulls in first summer plumage spent time near West Light on 10 June 1975 (DWF). Another in juvenile plumage was seen briefly on 27 August 1978 (P. & R. Gilchrist). Both the June and August birds were chased by terns.

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*

An astonishing record is of an adult that spent the day near West Light on 20 June 1969 (CB, NB). Other more seasonable sightings were of single adults on 25-29 April 1976 (AR, J. & S. Redmond) and on 1 February 1979 (D. Gray). A specimen was taken near Sable Island on 9 December 1905 (Allen 1916).

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* (P; AMNH, NSMS, ROM)

There are recent records for every month, but it has been most abundant in May and November. Most summer birds are immature, as are 7 of 8 specimens in the Dwight collection. The bird is most commonly seen at the island's tips, sometimes on the beaches. It was present in unprecedented numbers during May and early June 1978, feeding voraciously along the island's beaches on swarms of the amphipod *Parathemisto gaudichaudi*. The Bouteilliers seldom listed it, perhaps because it was commonplace and "very numerous" (Piers MS).

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini* (P)

Two adults flying over the south beach on 15 February 1965 (CB) and another on 19 December 1966 (CB, NB) were extraordinary. They were sufficiently close so that forked tails, in addition to the diagnostic wing patterns, could be appreciated. There have been subsequent winter sightings near the southern end of the province. Other birds on Sable Island have occurred at more usual seasons: in

fall, an immature on 27 August 1969, another on 12 September 1974, and an adult and immature on 16-29 October 1978; and in spring, with Kittiwakes at the west tip, adults on 12 June 1977 (Fig 10), 26 May 1978, and 19 June 1979.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Tufts (1973) erroneously reported that R. Bouteillier made a first Nova Scotian sighting of this species on 10 June 1902. This is the date of Bouteillier's interview with Piers, who wrote (Piers MS) on the tern: "Rare. Sometimes rather plentiful. Thinks it breeds. Summer." This tantalizing statement deserves serious consideration, since the Bouteilliers certainly reported and collected the 3 usual breeding terns. The bird has been seen a few times in recent years elsewhere in Nova Scotia, usually in midsummer.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* (P; AMNH, ROM, SMS)

On 15-16 July 1971, A.R. Lock (in verb.) counted 2585 terns around colonies, fishing in the sea, and resting on beaches. About 60% were Arctic, 30% Common, and 10% Roseate Terns. In late May 1977, I estimated more roughly that there were 5000 terns, but many could have been transient. Terns arrived on the island with marked regularity during 1967-1979 (earliest 7 May, latest 17 May, median 10 May). Their departure was less regular. Many adults left the island colonies in early August; the median date of last sightings was 26 September and the latest was a Common Tern on 28 October 1979 (AR). The terns nest in pure and mixed colonies. Nests have not been looked for in all years, as colonies were generally avoided. First nests were found on 18 May 1977, 20 May 1978, and 20 May 1979 (species uncertain), but it is believed that most birds do not lay before June. The latest incubated clutch was of a Common Tern on 14 August 1970. Fledglings appeared after mid-July. A nearly fledged Common Tern was found as late as 13 September 1974.

Terns were clearly much more abundant in earlier times. Dwight (1895) thought that two-thirds were Arctic, the rest Common, with "a sprinkling" of Roseate Terns. Saunders (1902a) thought that the "common tern probably outnumbers the arctic by two or three to one". Dwight was probably more familiar with terns and spent more time on the island. References to numbers are generally casual. Saunders (1902a) refers to "many tens of thousands". Superintendent R.J. Bouteillier's diary (Nova Scotia Archives) accounts for a minimal 30 1/2 buckets of terns' eggs collected in 1886. William Saunders (father of W.E.), who was in charge of the massive tree-planting operations of 1901, was interested in the fertilizing role of the terns. He writes (quoted in St. John 1921) "after travelling over the greater part of the island and seeing the immense numbers of terns everywhere, from a rough computation per acre and the acreage of the island, we estimated that these birds alone did not fall far short of a million on the island." Another interesting difference between the terns in those times and today is their earlier arrival in the past. The arrival of terns during 11 years between 1845 and 1908 (superintendents' diaries, plus the Bouteilliers' records in Table IV) was as early as 23 April and as late as 5 May, with a median of 28 April, almost 2 weeks earlier than in recent years (see above). The difference could be due to change in mean or variance in the arrival time, or to the much greater probability of sighting the vanguard of the massive population in earlier times. The tendency for earlier arrivals in the 19th century was evidently not expressed in earlier nestings. First nests (or eggs) were reported during 6 years between 1850 and 1901 as early as 20 May and as late as 28 May, with a median of 25 May, no earlier than in recent years. The Bouteilliers also reported them as late as 25 October in 1902 and 1908.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* (P; AMNH, NMC, SMS)

Arctic Terns nest in numbers today, but were immensely more common in the

last century (see under previous species). They arrived with regularity in early May, sometimes a day or so later than first-sighted Common Terns. Their breeding schedule seems to be about the same as that of the Common Tern, except that they finish earlier. A few rather recently fledged young were noted on 10 September 1974, but generally all were gone before mid-September. The latest, a group of largely immature birds on 1 October 1976, may have been transient. Varying numbers of subadult Arctic Terns occurred on the island from year to year. Of 28 skins in the Dwight collection, 12 are in the "portlandica" plumage. In 1973 it was estimated in late May and early June that almost one-third of this species in groups resting on beaches were in this plumage. In 1977, on the other hand, fewer than 1% of such groups were subadult. The subadult birds were involved in defence around colonies, but were not seen at nests.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* (P; AMNH, ROM, SMS)

This (Fig 11) is the least abundant nesting tern, with some 250 on the island in mid-July 1971 (see under Common Tern). This may be a somewhat high estimate, but it did nest successfully in numbers. Of 93 near-fledging terns banded in colonies near East Light between 28 July and 3 August 1970, 46 were Roseate and the rest Common. In recent years, however, Roseate Terns have declined sharply in abundance. No more than 5 pairs were seen on the west half of the island in 1978 and 1979, and possibly 10 pairs occurred in the east half in 1979. What was the largest concentration of breeding Roseate Terns in Canada now seems to be disappearing. Similar declines elsewhere are attributed to exploitation by humans of the tern's winter range (Nisbet 1980). The birds arrived later and departed sooner than did the other breeding terns. The earliest was on 13 May, and the median 17 May, during 1967-1979. These dates hardly differ from those in Table IV. The latest in fall were 12 birds on 27 September 1970.

Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*

An immature bird was observed with Arctic Terns, dip-feeding close to the south beach on 4 July 1972 (DW). No storm had occurred within days prior to the occurrence. There are a few other records from the province.

Least Tern *Sterna albitrons*

Richard Bouteillier's comments on this species are summarized (Piers MS) as: "only about 20 or 30 specimens in ten years. Fall. Does not breed." James Bouteillier listed "several" for 11 September 1908. Both accounts are plausible, since they obviously knew the regular terns, and since the Least Tern has occurred occasionally elsewhere in the province.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*

Five of this southern tern were seen fighting 50-knot, post-hurricane gales on 16 August 1971 (DW). They were exhausted and permitted close inspection in flight and on the beach. There are 2 specimens and 3 sight records from elsewhere in the province.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*.

The 3 sight records are of 1 on 17 July 1963, another unseasonable on 29 June 1967 (both CB, NB), and of 2 on 4 November 1968 (IM et al.). The species is a rare transient in the province.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (P; AMNH, SMS)

Records since 1967 (Table III, the bird here reckoned as a freshwater species) imply a surprising regularity offshore for a bird that has just begun to breed in the border region of the province. Early July adults in 3 years may have been non-breeders. Generally they appeared in ones and twos, often staying around the

island's ponds for days, but some were seen at the island's tips. The 2 specimens were taken on 31 August 1900 and 9 September 1902, only the latter reported by Dwight (1903).

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* (P)

One was seen on 14 August 1965, "furrowing" a shallow pond near the Meteorological Station (CB, NB). Remains of another in May 1969 were doubtless a victim of the previous October hurricane, which brought many of the species to Nova Scotia.

Razorbill *Alca torda* (P; AMNH)

In addition to the 2 males in the Dwight collection taken on 28 November 1900, a bird was seen alive on shore on 5 February 1964, remains of 3 have been found on beaches (1 in "Arrow" oil; Brown et al. 1973), and individuals have been sighted from boats near the island on 18 May 1976 and 15 May 1977. It is probably more regular around the island than these few records suggest (Brown et al. 1975). The statement on the terse list by Downs (1888) that it "breeds on Sable Island" is unsupported and unlikely.

Common Murre *Uria aalge* (P)

Large numbers were seen on 12 February 1964 off the south beach with Thick-billed Murres. Small numbers have been seen off beaches at other times, and a few have been found dead or moribund of natural causes or oiling. About 125 came ashore in "Arrow" oil in late winter 1970, their home colonies probably in Newfoundland or the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Brown et al. 1973). A large number of oiled birds also appeared in spring 1977 (AR). The earliest bird in fall was on 19 October 1963, and the latest in spring were 2 on 16 May 1976. A bird on the beach during 20-25 June 1974 was injured.

Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* (P; AMNH, NMC)

The few sight records of murre offshores were usually of this species when identified, as were most dead birds on beaches. An estimated 2700 came ashore in "Arrow" oil in late winter 1970, their home colonies probably in West Greenland (Brown et al. 1973). A corpse found in March 1977 had been banded as a chick in Upernavik District, Greenland, on 20 August 1974. The earliest in fall were 6 on 11 November 1963, and the latest in spring was an actively flying and diving bird on 14 June 1979.

Dovekie *Alle alle* (P; AMNH, SMS)

These birds are rather frequent as corpses and occasionally seen alive on beaches or ponds. A particularly large Dovekie "wreck" occurred on 29 December 1965. Some 1250 came ashore in "Arrow" oil in late winter 1970 (Brown et al. 1973). The bird appeared in fall as early as 2 November 1969 and live birds were seen as late in spring as 15 May 1977. They occurred in gull diets during 1969 and 1970 nesting seasons (Lock 1973), but whether taken alive or as old carrion is uncertain.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

About 50 came ashore in "Arrow" oil in late winter 1970, but corpses of this neritic alcid could have been brought from the mainland coast in the oil.

Common Puffin *Fratercula arctica* (P; AMNH, NMC, ROM)

Some have been seen alive, and more as corpses. A few were found in "Arrow" oil in late winter 1970. The earliest live birds in fall were 5 on 20 November 1970, and 4 adults and 6 immatures were found recently oiled on 3 July 1970.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

In recent years a "carrier" pigeon with a message container occurred on 6-11 June 1964; banded birds occurred on 19 June 1968 and 2-3 October 1973, and unbanded ones on 5 August 1965, 22 August 1968, 3 February 1969, and 2 March 1979. The implication may be that "domestic" birds are particularly prone to wandering. Pigeons were kept on the island in the late 19th century, in an attempt to alert the mainland of disasters (summarized by Appleton 1968). There is a number of references to these recalcitrant pigeons in the diaries of Superintendent Bouteillier for 1890-1895 (Nova Scotia Archives), and the project seemed clearly unsuccessful. (It is noteworthy that a son of Andrew Downs, the well-known Halifax naturalist, served as pigeon keeper in 1890-91, but there appears to be no account by him, or secondhand, of any observations on birds).

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

A bird on 10 August 1979 was studied at leisure at distances as close as 15 m by AR. This was a first provincial occurrence, preceding by 2 weeks another individual photographed on Seal Island, Yarmouth Co.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* (P; NMC)

These doves are increasingly frequent in fall in the province, less so in spring, and this is reflected in records from the island (Table III). Large counts were 12 on 24 October 1973, 25 on 28-30 September 1974, and up to 50 beginning in mid-October 1979, of which 27 were found dead by mid-November. An unseasonable bird appearing on 27 June 1976 died on 3 July (not in Table III). James Bouteillier (Piers MS) reported in 1901 that "about two years ago a number seen in fall", and Bouteillier (1908b) listed a bird for 26 September 1907.

Passenger Pigeon *Ectopistes migratorius*

A report by Capt. William Townsend to the Nova Scotia Government on 26 April 1848 (Nova Scotia Archives) states that "as game, there is an abundance of ducks and also of pigeons and plover in their season." I can find no other mention of the possible occurrence of Passenger Pigeons in archival or published reports, but their occurrence is quite plausible in view of their onetime abundance in the province. Much more fascinating is James Bouteillier's listing of 1 on 27 October 1903. The "Remarks" column reads, in the hand of Harry Piers: "Doubtless a dove. Not in hand." Yet the Bouteilliers evidently knew the Mourning Dove (see previous species). It is perhaps idle to add another speculation on the demise of the pigeon: that individuals had poor orientation abilities, having been so long dependent on the joint skills of massive flocks.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* (P)

The bird is a fairly regular vagrant on the island (Table III). Spring sightings are rare in the province. One on 14 July 1966 was early. Bouteillier (1908b) lists 1 on 26 October 1907.

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (P; AMNH)

Most of this species arrived late in spring, the latest arriving on 23 June 1976, dying on 3 July (Table III). Birds arriving in early July are assumed to have been normal migrants; 1 on 16 July 1976 was in juvenile plumage. The Bouteilliers' 2 sightings and 3 specimens were from August to September.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*. AMNH)

Early reports of Snowy Owls summering on the island and exploiting rodents and rabbits (Gilpin 1858; 1881; Vieth 1907; Nova Scotia Archives, superintendent diaries) are almost matched by the recent appearance of a very tame bird on 5-6 August 1964 (CB, NB et al.). John J. Elliot (in litt. 1948, to H.F. Lewis, Chief,

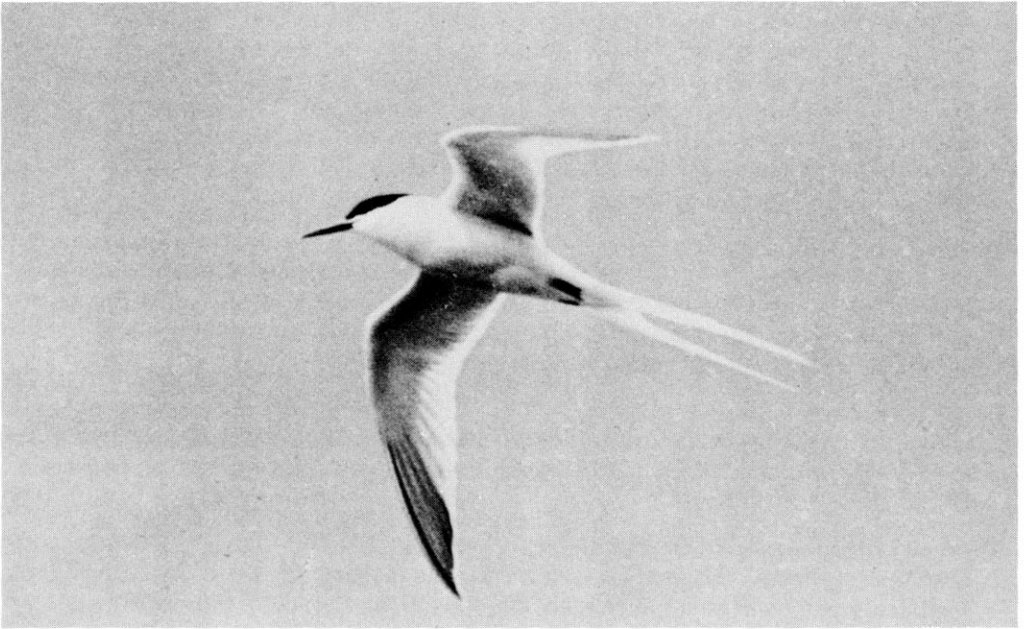


Fig 11 The beautiful Roseate Tern has all but disappeared as a nesting species on the island in recent years. (Photo: June 1968, I. McLaren.)



Fig 12 An errant Boreal Owl, found in distress in December 1968, became the ward of Dr. Robie Tufts, Wolfville, N.S. (Photo: 17 January 1969, I. McLaren.)

Dominion Wildlife Service) reported a bird "bent on killing rats" that had remained until late May 1948. Seven have been seen during the normal season since 1967, the earliest on 17 November 1979 and the latest on 15 March 1975. There are no rodents or rabbits now, nor pheasants, which were known to have been taken by owls (1 seen carrying a hen on 30 November 1968). The Bouteilliers' sightings and specimens were from the usual season, but a "dozen" on 25 November 1905 (Bouteillier 1906) were exceptional.

Hawk Owl *Surnia ulula* (AMNH)

Among the specimens in the Dwight collection are a female taken on 10 November 1900 and a male from the unusual date of 10 June 1902. The latter is listed by James Bouteillier as is another by Richard Bouteillier on 9 October 1908. There have been no recent reports.

Barred Owl *Strix varia*

One was found in an old barn (now destroyed) near East Light on 31 July 1966 (CB, NB), and another tame bird was seen near West Light on 10 November 1975 (AR).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

The few sightings of individuals were : on 3 August 1964, 25 May 1966, 4 November and 22-23 November 1968, 20 May 1971, and 16-17 April 1977.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

One landed on a building near West Light on 29 July 1966 and allowed close inspection (CB, NB).

Boreal Owl *Aegolius funereus* (P)

An adult Boreal Owl was picked up alive near West Light on 23 December 1968 (Fig 12). It was fed on House Sparrows until 17 January 1969, when it was sent by CB and NB to the care of Dr. Robie Tufts, Wolfville, N.S. (Tufts 1973).

Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius acadicus* (NMC)

Judging from accumulated pellets, one had been present for some days before discovery in an outbuilding near West Light on 16 August 1963, and remained for 4 more days (CB). Another struck a wire fence and was found dead on 2 December 1974 (J. Redmond). One was reported by Bouteillier (1908b) on 21 February 1907.

Whip-poor-will *Caprimulgus vociferus* (NSMS)

Birds were found recently dead on 3 June 1966 and on 31 May 1967; a live bird occurred on 19 June 1967, and another was found dying on 9 May 1970.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor* (P; AMNH)

Nighthawks were occasional (Table III), and often lingered for days, apparently feeding successfully. They arrived regularly into June, but birds in July were considered to be normal migrants, as they are on the move in the province at large then. Bouteillier (1908b) recorded a bird on 1 May 1907, earlier than any recent ones. A late specimen, taken on 7 October 1902, was listed by James Bouteillier as "the first one ever noticed here".

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica* (P; NMC)

Swifts were regular in spring and occasional in fall (Table III). Bouteillier (1906) recorded a later bird, on 30 September 1905.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*. (AMNH)

One was seen on 3 July 1963, 2 on 11 August 1965, and a few since 1966 (Table III includes some unidentified hummingbirds, assumed to be this species). The specimen in the Dwight collection is a desiccated head labelled "summer? 1900".

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* (NMC)

These birds are perhaps surprisingly common (Table III), and often linger, fishing in the island's ponds. They were also regular in the early 1900's (Table IV). James Bouteillier reported 3 unseasonable birds on 2 July 1902. Two on 28 December 1969 (not in Table III) may have been attempting to winter in the region.

Common Flicker *Colaptes auratus* (AMNH)

Flickers were regular, sometimes in small groups, especially in fall (Table III). They often stayed for days, foraging successfully on the open terrain. Two on 22 June 1963 were later than any more recent birds (Table III). One appeared unexpectedly on 20 February 1977 (AR). They were also regular in fall at the turn of the century (Table IV). All birds reported have been "Yellow-shafted Flickers".

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius* (NMC)

The few records are of individuals on 21 August 1964, 17 August 1966, 5 October 1967 (dead next day), 19-23 August 1969, and of a long-dead corpse in late May 1975. Richard Bouteillier reported a later bird on 9 October 1908.

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus* (P)

Two on 3 August 1964 and 1 on 5 November 1966 were outmatched by a minor invasion in 1969, involving at least 6 birds between 21 August and 28 December. There were other birds on 21 May and 16-17 October 1975, 2 during 15-25 September 1977, and 1 on 16-24 October 1979.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens* (P; NMC)

Recorded sparingly in most years (Table III), the Downy Woodpecker did not linger as a rule. One on 4 July 1963 was unseasonable.

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides arcticus*

A male was seen on 7 August 1965 (CB, NB) and another on 15 May 1969 (E. Androschuk).

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus* (P)

Kingbirds are common migrants (Table III). There were peak counts of 5-25 birds per day during 10 springs of 1967-1979, between 27 May and 12 June. Individuals often arrived and stayed in June, and several times into early July. Possible late migrants or nonbreeders were 2 on 14-16 July 1968, 1 on 12 July 1971, and 1 on 3 July 1978 (none in Table III). The Bouteilliers found it more regular in fall (Table IV) and listed an unseasonable bird on 9 July 1907.

Gray Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis*

One was closely observed around West Light for 3 days, 20-23 October 1973, and was well-described by AR for a second provincial sight record.

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*

Individuals of this regular vagrant were seen on 24-25 September 1970 (JB, DW), 10 April 1971 (DW), and on 2-3 October and 17 October 1975 (AR, IM et al.). The spring bird was the first of the few from this season in the province.

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus* (P)

The bird was occasional, and rather late, in spring, and somewhat more frequent in fall (Table III). A freshly dead bird on 22 July 1963 was early.

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*

This was one of the less common of the regular Nova Scotian flycatchers on the island and tended to appear late in spring (Table III). Individuals on 25 June 1964 and 4 July 1971 (the latter not in Table III) were especially late or unseasonable.



Fig 13 Nova Scotia's fourth (Sable Island's only) Say's Phoebe, far from its western home. (Photo: 18 September 1974, I. McLaren.)

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* (P)

A bird on 18-19 September 1974 (Fig 13) was the fourth provincial record of this western species.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris* (AMNH)

This is one of the regular and common passerines, arriving quite late and continuing to arrive in small numbers and linger through June (Table III). There were peak counts of 5-39 individuals on 7-18 June during 9 years of 1967-1979. One on 9 July 1963 was unseasonable, and a very late bird was tentatively identified as this species (CB) on 16 November 1969 (not in Table III). The Bouteilliers reported this species quite regularly in spring (Table IV), but may have been loath to identify other small species ("various kinds" on 26 September 1906; Bouteillier 1908a).

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum*

Both *E. alnorum* and *E. minimus* have been identified by appearance and voice (the former mostly as "Traill's Flycatcher"), but most records did not discriminate (Table III). Of those that did, there were 40 Alder (or "Traill's") and 22 Least Flycatchers. The earliest Alder Flycatcher was on 18 May 1977 and the latest in spring (as "Traill's") was on 26 June 1975. An unidentified *Empidonax* on 26 April 1969 (E. Androschuk; not in Table III) was very early, but 4 birds during 1-4 May 1975 were not unprecedented in the province. The only counts exceeding 5 per day were on 10 June 1967, 7 June 1968, and 10 June 1974. One *Empidonax* sp. on 6 July 1972 was between seasons. They were less common in fall. The earliest identified as "Traill's" was on 1 August 1978, and the latest was on 15 September 1978. Nothing can be said about the possibility that some of these birds were Willow Flycatchers (*E. traillii*), a pair of which was found nesting in the province in 1980. In addition, the occurrence of Acadian Flycatchers (*E. virescens*) has been suspected among birds seen by DWF, ELM, and IM. Two very green-backed birds with white eye rings and forked tails, on 23 May 1977 (IM), looked particularly convincing. However, such a "difficult" species would need to be confirmed by specimen or measurements from netted birds. A supposed Acadian flycatcher noted by James Bouteillier on 31 May 1903 was of course not critically identified.

Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus* (P)

The status of this species is largely implicit under the previous one. The earliest spring bird identified as Least Flycatcher with confidence was on 24 May 1977, and the latest were on 20 June 1969 and 1975. The earliest identified Least Flycatcher in fall was on 25 August 1969 and the latest on 5 September 1979. James Bouteillier's bird on 20 September 1903 was probably not critically identified.

Eastern Wood Pewee *Contopus virens* (P; NSMS)

Pewees were regular and sometimes common in spring migration (Table III). There were peaks of 6-28 birds per day in 7 years during 1967-1979, on 7-12 June. They were less frequent in fall.

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Nuttallornis borealis* (P)

Although scarce, it was very regular in June (Table III). A very early bird on 25 April 1975 (AR) is the earliest recorded in the province. A bird on 25 July 1965 and 2 on 21 August 1966 were earlier than those in Table III.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* (P; AMNH)

Horned Larks occurred as migrants (Table III); the only recent winter reports were of 1 on 18 February 1971 and 2 on 24 January 1972. It may occur more regularly than indicated, as it seemed generally unattracted by buildings. The Bouteilliers reported it quite regularly in migration (Table IV), and twice in winter ("numerous" on 21 January 1904). The northern *E. a. alpestris* has been more commonly identified (includes 2 specimens in the Dwight collection), but *E. a. praticola* has also been seen and photographed.

Tree Swallow *Iridoprocne bicolor* (P)

Swallows frequented the air over ponds near West Light and perched on and around buildings, so that arrivals, departures, and peaks of abundance were readily detected. Tree Swallows generally appeared after their mid-April arrival on the mainland (Table III). Peaks of 6-70 birds occurred in every year of 1967-1979, sometimes more than once a season, between 14 May - 12 June. They arrived routinely in and lingered through June. One appeared unseasonably on 4 July 1964. In 1968 a pair stayed until 4 July, investigating inadequate, Starling-occupied holes, but not nesting. Another pair nested in a next box near West Light in July 1975, with unknown success, and 4 young were fledged from the same box in early August 1977. Fall migrants were also regular, and there were large flights of ca. 50 on 20 August 1968, 200 on 26 August 1969, and 50 on 25-27 September 1975. The Bouteilliers reported swallows frequently on their lists, but generally did not identify species. None of their observations seem seasonally remarkable.

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* (P)

The species was regular in spring, with small peaks of 5-20 birds occurring between 16 May and 8 June during 8 years of 1967-1979 (Table III). Most of the fall migrants were in 2 flocks, of 100 during 19-25 August 1967 and of 30 on 16-18 August 1968. The latest bird, on 21 November 1968, was injured or sick (not in Table III).

Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

One was closely observed by CB and NB on 27 August 1964, for a first provincial record. Others since were: 3 on 16 August 1966 (CB, NB), 2 on 4 August 1969 (CB, NB), 1 on 11 May 1970 (DW), and 2 on 8-16 May 1971 (JB, WS, DW). The bird has been seen and photographed elsewhere in Nova Scotia.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (CP; AMNH, NMC)

The species was as regular and common as the Tree Swallow (Table III). Peaks of 8-40 birds occurred every year during 1967-1979, often more than once a season, as early as 1 May 1969 (when 6 of 10 died) and as late as 11 June 1974. Richard Bouteillier noted for 16 July 1907 (on MS list, but not in the published version) that: "swallows have built a nest in a barn at eastern end of Island. I am informed that one nested on the Island 20 years ago." Elliot (1956) wrote of a bird summering, but not known to be breeding, in 1948. Individuals in the late 1960's and early 1970's investigated outbuildings, but evidently did not nest. In 1975 a nest in the now demolished house at Old No. 3 Station was started around 22 June and had 2 eggs on 30 June. In 1976, 2 young were fledged from a nest in a building at Old Main Station (where there was another unexamined nest), and 5 from a shed near West Light, and 2 more nests were found in a barn near West Light. The birds also nested at Old Main and at Old No. 3 Station in 1977, but in unknown numbers and unknown success. Birds appearing after an hiatus on 13 July 1968 and 1972 were considered to be early fall migrants (Table III). Peaks of 5-50 individuals occurred during 11 years of 1967-1979 during 5-30 August. A bird on 19 November 1969 was injured (not in Table III). A completely inexplicable record was of a bird in fine weather in lively flight over the south beach on 9 February 1969 (CB, NB).

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* (P)

Although much scarcer than the Tree, Bank, and Barn Swallows, this species was regular in spring and fall (Table III). At times individuals lingered through June, especially in 1976 when some mud-gathering was seen, but no nests found. One appearing on 4 July 1968 was considered to be between seasons (not in Table III). An adult with a chestnut forehead, as in some southern races, was seen on 15-16 May 1972 (JB).

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva* (NMC)

One of the most extraordinary occurrences on the island was the appearance of this vagrant in 2 successive years. Five swallows that spent the cold night of 10-11 May 1968 huddled on a windowsill and 9 on 17-19 May were noted as "odd" by CB. In later May, I observed "Cliff Swallows" with pale throats and darkish rumps that did not properly impress me until I picked up a decayed but clearly identifiable Cave Swallow corpse in a small outbuilding on 21 June. In 1969 a group of 5 Cliff Swallows arrived on 13 June, and next day 3 Cave Swallows were seen close at hand, perched on a clothesline with other swallows (CB, NB, E. Garvey). Two were seen on 15 June, 2 on 20 June, and 1 on 30 June, at times with Cliff and other swallows on a clothesline (CB, NB). A specimen collected on Seal Island, Yarmouth Co., on 16 May 1971 completes the story. The species had not hitherto been found closer than southern Florida. Both specimens have been determined by Dr. W.E. Godfrey (in litt.) as belonging to the Cuban population, *P. f. cavicola*.

Purple Martin *Progne subis* (AMNH, NMC)

Martins are regular in spring and occasional in fall migration (Table III). The specimen in the Dwight collection is labelled 27 April 1899 (?1900 in the catalogue). A record of "numbers" on 20 August 1904 (Bouteillier 1905; "one" on original list) is slightly earlier than any recent fall migrants.

Gray Jay *Perisoreus canadensis*

One first seen on 5 July 1965 spent most of the following year on the island, coming to a feeder until April 1966 (CB, NB).

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata* (P)

The only records were of remains of 1 on 9 June 1969, 8 between 29 May and 24 June 1970, 1 on 9 August 1970, 1 during 21-28 October 1974, 1 on 2 October and another on 14-25 October 1975, 2 on 4 June 1976, 1 on 31 May, 3 during 18-24 June, and 1 on 7-9 September 1978. The dates do not entirely coincide with the partial migrations expected in this species during early spring and late fall.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* (P)

The only records are 1 on 18-20 January 1968, 1 during 3-10 June 1974, 2 on 20 May 1975, and 1 on 16-17 October 1975.

Common Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos* (P)

Crows were first seen in recent years by CB on 8 December 1965, and thereafter became year-round residents and nested. In late summer and fall numbers were augmented by local young and up to 5-6 occurred on the island. It is possible that migrants arrived unnoticed. A nest with 4 eggs in the now demolished barn near East Light was abandoned after discovery on 1 June 1967. A nest on top of a small dune northeast of Old No. 3 Station on 26 May 1971 had 5 eggs, and another in a like setting nearby in 1972 had 2 eggs on 12 May, 4 on 14 May, and fledged at least 1 young by 7 July. During 1967-1971, 3 crows were often seen in close association and 3 were attending the 1971 nest. Between 1977 and 1979 a trio ranged in the middle of the island and a pair near East Light, where nests were placed on the collapsed former light tower in May 1978 and 1979 (B. Beck). The bird behaved as a normal spring migrant at the turn of the century (Table IV), and evidently did not nest (Piers MS). Erskine (1953), however, stated from his 1953 visit that "one crow is said to live on the island" and next year saw a "flock of 9" in late August, which suggests that they nested on the island then.

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*

A small, thin-beaked, "smoother" crow attracted attention on 12 January 1967 by chasing a gull; normally the gulls chased the crows. It was very tame, allowing CB and NB to approach within 3 m; the resident Common Crows are very wary. Its voice was a distinctly nasal "ca-ar". There are 2 winter sight records of Fish Crows (1 earlier than the Sable Island bird; see Tufts 1973) from Cape Sable Island, Shelburne Co. The species has wintered as far north as Maine, but has not been reported elsewhere in Canada. It is of course only tentatively identifiable without specimens.

Black-capped Chickadee *Parus atricapillus*

The only records are of a flock of about 10 on 26 February 1967, 2 on 3-4 November 1968, and 2 on 17 May 1976.

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*

A single bird was noted on 10 May 1970, and another between 31 May and 9 June in the same year. The Bouteilliers reported it more frequently (Table IV, plus "several" on the unusual date of 3 July 1903).

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis* (P)

This nuthatch was seen in most years, often lingering on and around buildings for long periods, so that arrivals and departures could be monitored (Table III). Two birds that stayed from 21 June to 22 July 1968, a bird during 1-12 July 1969, and 2 on 8-10 July 1977 were between seasons (not in Table III). Macoun (1899), beguiled by their presence at all the lifesaving stations in summer 1899, wrote that they "possibly bred on the island this year", but later (Macoun & Macoun 1909) thought not. The Bouteilliers sometimes listed nuthatches, unidentified,

but assumed to be this species in Table IV. One unidentified nuthatch on 20 January 1907 (Bouteillier 1908b) was said to have been there since fall, on the original list.

Brown Creeper *Certhia familiaris*

The few sightings were of 1 on 18 May 1964, 1 on 6 July 1966, 1 on 25 September and another on 4 October 1967, 2 on 20 October 1969, 2 on 26 September 1973, and 1 on 30 October 1976. The Bouteilliers reported an earlier spring bird (Table IV).

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* (AMNH)

The bird was occasional in spring and fall (Table III). One in late June 1967 (D. & J. Gunn) was unseasonable (not in Table III) and another on 12 December 1965 was late. The specimen in the Dwight collection was taken on 5 October 1898.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

A singing male on 10 July 1965, and individuals on 2-19 July 1967 and 24-27 May 1969 (all CB, NB) are the only recent records of this vagrant. The Bouteilliers reported the species in 4 years, but these may be doubted, as they did not list Winter Wrens, although they collected one (see above species).

Long-billed Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

One was watched as it skulked among rushes of a small pond near West Light on 29 August 1964 (CB, NB). This and the Short-billed Marsh Wren are quite regular as vagrants in the province, but may be too weak-flying to reach Sable Island with the same regularity.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* (P; AMNH)

An individual taken in "fall of 1894" is in the Dwight collection, yet Dwight (1903) thought it worth reporting a later bird taken on 3 September 1902 (this date is also on the specimen label, but appears to be corrected on James Bouteillier's MS list as 5 September). The Bouteilliers listed 2 other September birds (Table IV). The bird was a vagrant in the province then, but has nested in recent years and is now quite regular on the island, especially in fall (Table III). Most stayed for a few days at most, but 1 was present for more than a year, frequenting a feeder, but dying on 14 February 1967 after severe weather. One bird appeared on 7 January 1970, remained alive until at least 13 January, but was found dead on the 17th.

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis* (P; AMNH, NMC)

Catbirds were regular, although not common in fall (Table III). There were spring peaks of 5-16 individuals during 9 years of 1967-1979, between 21 May and 14 June. They often lingered well into June, especially in the (now disappearing) *Rosa rugosa* thicket at Old Main Station. One bird (not in Table III) appeared after an hiatus on 1 July 1971. A male in the Dwight collection taken 18 April 1900 and "several" on 25 April 1903 were earlier than any recent ones.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum* (P)

Thrashers are vagrant in the province, but occurred with some regularity on the island (Table III). There were also 3 on 23 May 1965 and 1 on 2 April 1971 (not in Table III), abnormally early.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* (P)

Considering its abundance in the region, the Robin was not very common in spring, although regular (Table III). There are no earthworms on the island, but