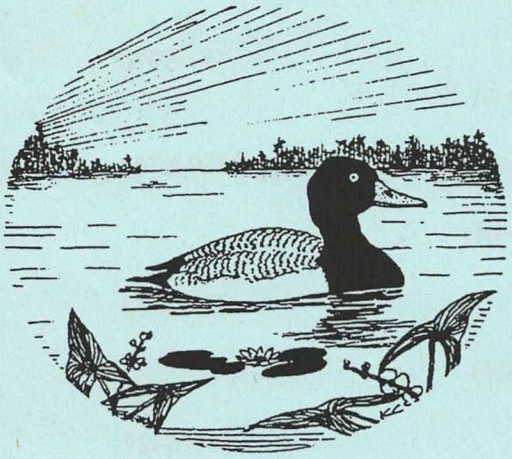

THE BLUE BILL

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In memory of Helen Quilliam, 1905-1997

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The **Blue Bill** is the Quarterly Bulletin of the Kingston Field Naturalists,
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Send submissions to the Editor by the first of the month of the publication date (March, June, September, December) to the address above, by fax to (613) 545-2499 to the attention of Sharon David, Dept. Psychology, Queen's University, or by e-mail to davids@pavlov.psyc.queensu.ca. The editor uses WordPerfect 7, but submissions are accepted in most formats or from most programs, IBM or MacIntosh. Please include a printed copy in case of disk error. Photographs, articles, and drawings can be scanned by the editor.

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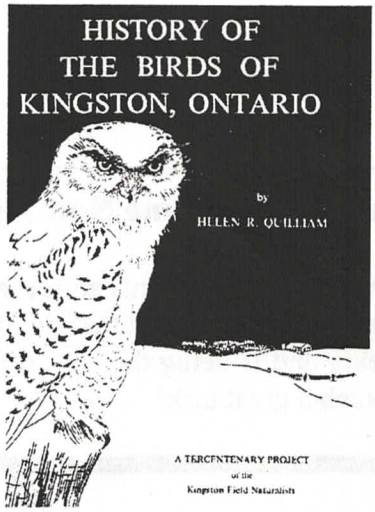
The President's Page

Anne Robertson

This special issue of *Blue Bill* is dedicated to the memory of Helen Quilliam who died on 13 January 1997 in her 92nd year. Helen came to Kingston and joined the Kingston Field Naturalists in 1952 and was a member for 45 years. After being president of the club, she became our Honorary President in the spring of 1966. Helen was always approachable for advice and constantly encouraging everyone with whom she came in contact. Her ability for hard work and "stickability" showed in the many club activities with which she involved herself.

From the early fifties to the late seventies, nearly 25 years, Helen almost single handedly produced *Blue Bill* on a Gestetner machine in her basement. I remember occasionally helping with collating the journals in the later years and realizing how much work Helen put into our quarterly journal.

In 1965, Helen's book *History of the Birds of Kingston* was published. Her forward thinking in this and other projects was remarkable. Her aim in writing the book was that future generations would "probably find it interesting to know of the bird life of the Kingston area" — and she was quite right! By the time the second edition was published in 1973, some noticeable changes had occurred. Several new birds had been added to the Kingston list, and numbers of some species decreased while others increased. Helen was aware that we should be assessing the losses and causes even then. A supplement to this book, *The Birds of Kingston*, was subsequently published together with Ron Weir in 1973.



In addition to these major projects, Helen wrote a column every 2 weeks for the *Kingston Whig Standard* on a variety of natural history topics that included bird sightings, results of censuses and Christmas counts, as well as the importance of habitat. From 6 July 1959 to 27 November 1968 a total of 444 columns were written — what a commitment! Several of these articles have been reprinted in this issue of *Blue Bill* beginning on page 54.

Protection of habitat was on Helen's agenda. She was one of the prime movers in acquiring the first 200 acres of the Otter Lake Sanctuary. This property was bought in 1963 for about $125 from Gananoque Power and Light Corporation. Subsequently the gravel was sold to the township from what is now known as 'the gravel pit' for $2000. The Kingston Field Naturalists ended up with a net gain of funds! Subsequent purchases increased this protected area to a little over 500 acres and in 1995, on the occasion of her 90th birthday, it was renamed the *Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake*.

Helen was very active in the Saw-whet Owl banding that took place at Prince Edward Point from 1975 to about 1985. This programme ultimately helped in the area becoming protected as the *Prince Edward Point Wildlife Area.*

Helen handled the administration of the banding programme, managing all the records and schedules for the approximately 100,000 birds banded!

This photograph from a Saw-whet Owl banding evening was one of Helen's favorites.

Well into her seventies Helen adapted to modern technology by buying and learning how to use a personal computer. Helen had kept the KFN bird records from the early 1950s to the late 1960s, setting up the system that continues to be an invaluable resource material today. These records, together with her book and Saw-whet Owl records, have left a legacy to be treasured. Her abilities were outstanding, she was an inspiration to everyone she met, her example, dedication and foresight made her a most remarkable person. Those who knew her will never forget her.

Several articles about various aspects of Helen's life, written by some of those who knew her, appear in this issue culminating into a report of the very memorable ceremony on the 10 May 1997 at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary.

Annual reports have been postponed to the September issue of *Blue Bill* but you will find the regular Spring Round-up (page 60) as well as some reasons for the new KFN Information Telephone Line (page 68).

KFN Information Line Now Activated

The KFN information line with upcoming events and recent wildlife sightings is now available at 549-8023. Please leave sightings at the end of the recorded message. The information is updated weekly and is being done by Bob Sachs. We would like to thank Bob for undertaking such a great task!

Helen Quilliam: The Early Years

Dorothy Griswold
[Helen's older sister]

Three daughters were born to the Roses of Elmira, New York during the period of 3½ years early in their marriage. There would later be a boy, Bob, and by the time Helen was 15, another girl, Betty. I am Dorothy, the third of those just three girls. I always regarded my position in the family as somewhat insignificant — but Helen was a real role model for me, someone I admired and adored. She was always very protective of me — especially against the more volatile moods of the middle sister. I was always able to confide in Helen, telling her things I could not have told anyone else, and she always respected those confidences, and never told on me.

When I was about 7 years old, the family moved to a larger house on the banks of the Chemung River. We had a canoe which we were allowed to use, and there was an island in the river which became our favorite play area. We were within shouting distance of home, but still felt completely alone over there. We spent hours on that island, making sand castles, climbing trees, exploring and doing the sorts of things that children like to do. I remember there being flowers and birds there, and that Helen took much more interest in them than Mary or I did.

Throughout our childhood, Sundays, after church, was picnic time, and with the advent of the automobile we would explore the countryside. Dirt roads were like magnets to Dad. On one of these outings, when I was about 12, we came upon an abandoned, fallen down farm house with a magnificent view of the valley and hills. It had not been lived in by humans for years, but the house, with its roof caved in and falling into the cellar, was home to a number of wild creatures, including snakes. Our parents bought the place and about 50 acres, much of it forest. For the first year or two we camped there summers in a large tent — then Dad set about resurrecting the house, which became, to our modest standards, habitable, although devoid of electricity and running water. A modest swimming pool was created, fed by an icy spring, and we learned to swim in the company of frogs, with whom we became quite friendly. Our summers there were wonderful — and Helen was always the first one in the spring to go into the woods and find the earliest wildflowers. Birds abounded in the area and mother was quite good at identifying them for us. During the meteor showers of August, we'd all drag our bedding outside and sleep under the stars, enjoying the greatest show that nature could provide.

Helen always threw herself completely into whatever she set out to do. She became a Girl Scout and was the first girl in Elmira to achieve the Eagle rank. She was an excellent swimmer and became swimming instructor for a large Connecticut Girl Scout camp, having passed the necessary tests, while in High School. She was always an excellent student, and had many friends. All too soon it was time for College, and after her graduation from Wells, she took a position teaching at a girl's school in Persia. This was in 1928 and is a story in itself. It was in Teheran that she met and

married Cyril Quilliam and from then on she lived in India, Palestine, Britain, and Egypt. On the rare vacations when she could visit home it was a cause for family celebration — and all her letters were treasured. It wasn't until she and Cyril settled in Kingston in 1953 that we were able to see her with any degree of regularity — but you know all about her life from that time on.

Helen Remembered — The Early Years

Robert B. Stewart

I first met Helen on May 15, 1953 in a woodlot adjoining a farm owned by the Woods family which ran from Highway 15 to the Cataraqui river. Mrs. Woods [Gwen] was a KFN member for many years. This area is now Woods Landing and the Rideau Marina property. In Helen's book *History of the Birds of Kingston* this area is referred to as "Smarts". In those years this was one of our prime birding areas — large concentrations of waterfowl in late February and March and migrating passerines in May with a shoreline that often held a few shorebirds. Helen and I introduced ourselves and proceeded to compare birding notes. Helen was newly arrived and pleased to hear there was a Nature Club and that there was to be a field trip the next day. I gave her my father-in-laws' (George Stirrett) phone number, they got in touch and she joined the group. That trip recorded the first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher for the area. I had left for Point Pelee on the noon of the 15th and so missed the event.

The Nature Club that Helen joined was quite different from the KFN of today except in the interest, curiosity and enthusiasm of its members. When the club was founded in 1949 luxury items like binoculars were not plentiful and those at a reasonable price ($75 to $100) were of poor quality compared to those appearing in the mid fifties at half the price. Telescopes of a modern design were just appearing and some of us used telescopes that would have been familiar to sailors in previous centuries. Outdoor clothing was more of the material and design of the 1930's . Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* and Taverner's *Birds of Canada* were the commonest identification aids. The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology bird song recordings had not yet appeared. The area was also different. Kingston, by incorporating Portsmouth village in the late 1940's expanded its population to approximately thirty thousand, hence the rural landscape was much closer. The city dump on Bath road, just east of the railway tracks to Dupont was where many of us saw our first Great Black-backed gulls. While some birding areas have disappeared such as Smart's and Clark's woods along Bath road, some have survived and perhaps improved like the Little Cataraqui conservation areas on King Street and Division Street. Winter access to Wolfe and Amherst islands after freeze up was on the ice roads, hence our knowledge of the winter birds on the islands in those years is scanty. The highway 401 was non-existent, and areas such as the Sandbanks were almost devoid of people (as many as ten families on the beach in mid July seemed like a crowd).

The club numbers were small, less than forty and Christmas bird counts had approximately a dozen participants. Club monthly meetings were, as now, on the third Thursday of the month in the Agriculture Board room of the now Provincial Public Health laboratory building on Barrie Street.

The *Blue Bill* had not come into existence, hence a club notice and the weekly column in the *Kingston Whig Standard*, "*Local Notes on Natural History*" edited by George Stirrett was the means of communicating between ourselves and the public.

Helen and her husband Brigadier Cyril D. Quilliam had quite deliberately chosen Kingston as their home. Cyril had been a career officer in the British army and was Deputy Director of Army Intelligence in the middle east during the second world war. Helen, born in the US, married Cyril in 1928 and began the life of a career army officer's wife. Helen was working in army intelligence headquarters in Cairo at a time that the German forces under Rommel were moving toward the Suez canal. Helen told me she had left for lunch and then remembering she had forgotten her purse, returned to the office. When she entered she saw an unauthorized man going through confidential papers, and if I remember correctly he was photographing them. Helen called for help and attempted to physically restrain the chap. Help came, the spy was captured and Helen was awarded a Mention in Dispatches. She believed she was the first American woman to receive such an award. She also recounted the time when the diplomatic corps had joined the palace staff at the Summer

Palace Hotel in Luxor and King Farouk had burst into their room in the middle of the night to show them a fish he had caught in the nearby Nile river. As Helen recounted, almost childishly pleased with his accomplishment.

A career in the army and working as a correspondent for the London Times during the Israeli-Arab conflict following the establishment of the state of Israel, did not, in Helen and Cyril's view

equip them for civilian careers. Since they both loved books and reading, they opened the *Old Book Collector* at 86 Brock Street. This was another learning experience for them. I remember Helen telling me of some of the costly lessons such as a valuable book sent out to a prospective buyer and returned with some of the plates missing, rendering the book valueless. Others, about which Helen was more sanguine and accepted as part of the learning process was vastly undervaluing some of their stock. They would be alerted to this when their published catalogue was out and phone calls poured in requesting a particular book be shipped immediately. One purchase for $13.75 that Helen urged on me was Robert Cushman Murphy's two volume set *Oceanic Birds of South America*, which I still treasure.

It was the production of their *Old Book Collector* catalogues that led to Helen's first major contribution to the Kingston Nature Club, as we were then known. Their catalog was produced on a Gestetner (it won't be many years before the use of this word will require a technical description). With that high tech piece of equipment the *Blue Bill* came into existence and issue No. 1, Vol. 1 was published in March 1954.

It seemed the custom of the time to name nature club publications after some bird — Cardinals, Orioles, Tanagers, etc. are (were) well represented. We chose *Blue Bill* to recognize the very large concentrations of Scaup that collected on the Cataraqui river, Elevator Bay and Wolfe Island in late February and March. These concentrations seemed to us quite distinctive. There was an editorial board. Helen and Art Hyde are identified, since at the end of that issue their names and addresses are given to which to send articles. This first issue had an editorial introduction :

> *The Kingston Nature Club is embarking on its first bulletin and the editors feel confident that this one number will not be the last. .... A collection of bulletins from this area may give in later years a consecutive story of the bird history of this region.*

How very true! Not only has the history been accumulated but it has been recognized as important. The recently created Ontario Natural Heritage Information Centre, a section of the Ministry of Natural Resources, has been trying to gather and map the identified sites of every recorded plant, vertebrate and invertebrate species in the province. They asked if a complete set of the *Blue Bill* could be made available since our club has one of the longest historical records of natural history observations in the province. Ron Weir was able to make a set available to them.

Helen's contribution to this first issue was "Bird Pictures in Ancient Egypt", illustrated with drawings. There were several points to this article. One was the accuracy of the drawings in Egyptian tombs of 2500 BC so that approximately 90 species of birds from that time are recognizable today. Helen suggested that comparable bird art did not appear in the west until the 19th century. Another point she made was that the ornithological and natural history record garnered from the tombs permits an insight into the changed physiography that has since occurred in Egypt. This approach

was typical of the scholarship that Helen contributed for three decades. The first issue of the *Blue Bill* in keeping with a goal of describing the natural history of the region had an article by Herb Blades, "A Naturalists Guide to the Kingston District" which described the geology of the area as well as sites which were then considered as of particular interest. The first six years of Christmas Bird Counts was reviewed by myself. We had gone from two observers to seventeen, from one party to four and from 20 species to 49. The 73 Gray Partridge seen mostly on Wolfe Island in 1951 (the first year the island was included in the count) would not only be a surprise today but emphasize the importance of the historical record. Readers of that first issue were also reminded that the botanical records and reports were important to a description of the ecology of the whole community. Prior to the *Blue Bill* the natural history and bird records were kept by George Stirrett on a series of filing cards, a system that Helen continued after George left for Ottawa in 1959.

The publication of the *Blue Bill* expanded the records both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the *Notes* section of the first issue we find that Ken (K.F.) Edwards had seen a Black Guillemot on the waterfront. It wasn't until Helen's 1965 book *History of the Birds of Kingston* that we find this was the second record, the first having been in 1904 noted by current member Wally Beaupre's uncle Edwin. History is truly a living thing.

The Kingston Whig Standard published a weekly column *Local Notes on Natural History* edited first by George Stirrett and after the spring of 1959 by Helen. Many of these articles gave Helen an opportunity to express her insight into natural history phenomena as well as a commitment to conservation of wildlife. The column also included each week the additions to the yearly list of birds seen within a 30 mile radius of the then described centre of our area — MacDonald Park. This brought her many phone calls from people describing their bird finds, some of whom had sufficient interest and Helen's encouragement to join the club.

The club had been involved in field projects from its beginning. Woodcock and Mourning Dove censuses, Chimney Swift banding, gull banding, etc. While many of these were initiated by George Stirrett, after his departure Helen stepped into the breach. Her somewhat gentle approach usually began with something like, "wouldn't it be interesting to know...". One of the projects she initiated was the study of the invasion of Snowy Owls on Wolfe Island in the winter of 1965. One of the questions Helen posed was did these owls hold territory during their southern incursions? Each of the owls was identified by plumage, its location marked on a map and each week groups of us would travel our assigned routes, noting the location and plumage description of the owls found. This study was published in the *Ontario Field Biologist*.

From 1953 onward, my own bird records show that I was with Helen on a good number of field trips. During these trips Helen would recount some of the events in her life with an ornithological perspective. One of these was either a Christmas bird count or a winter trip to Wolfe Island when she drove with club member Jim Bayly. As Helen recounted, Jim had thoughtfully removed the doors from the jeep he was then driving so that there would be no impediment to getting out quickly to look at a bird. There was also the added advantage of no sudden temperature change to fog the binoculars. Helen told me she was so cold she thought she would die before noon, then as she said, she was afraid she wouldn't. Another of Helen's memories was that of a teenager receiving in school what today might be considered as sex education. The ornithological context was the comparison her teacher made of an inexperienced young woman in the arms of a presumably more experienced young man, to that of a swan on the Niagara river above the falls, inattentive to the quickening pace of the current and too late, struggling in alarm at the brink only to be dashed to destruction on the rocks below.

Helen believed passionately in the scientific contribution that the "amateur" naturalist could make. She also believed that such a contribution required accurate observation and written description, a skill which she developed in herself and encouraged in others.

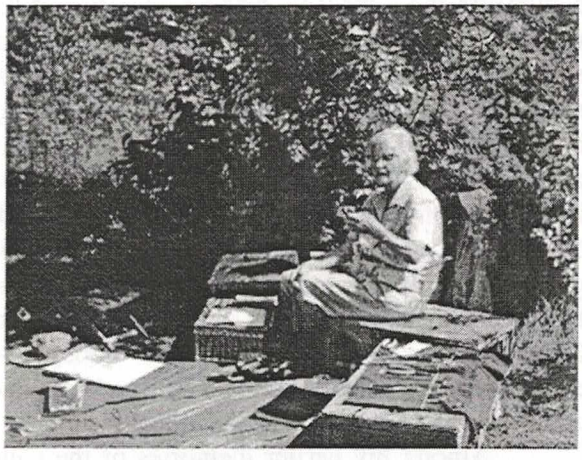
Remembering Helen Quilliam

Kit Chubb

Back in the 1977's when my housewifely diary entries mostly read, "Rain again — bought rubber boots for Nigel," "Planted red onion sets," "Robin and Robert took out sewage pump and cleaned it" — a new subject inserted itself. A nestling robin out too soon claimed my attentions. Now notes announced, "*Ousted* ate two caterpillars and a bit of strawberry; feathers growing fast," "Riding on my gardening hat," and "Canoeing picnic, baked beans for 12 people... took Ousted too, but he didn't like it." A few weeks dedicated to Ousted's progress was followed by our mutual introduction to Mrs. Quilliam, who was sufficiently intrigued by my growing excitement with a little bird to band it. Then indoctrination. Would I be interested in the bird-banding at Prince Edward Point?

Many dawn trips to Prince Edward Point followed, bringing along Robin and some of the brood, tagging around after Helen most of the day, scribbling notes about plumage, spitting on heads to look at skull formation (everybody used saliva to flatten the crown feathers, often in absorbed groups of twos and threes while nobody gave a thought to bacteria, and AIDS hadn't been invented). While I recorded the procedures she showed us, many of which I still practice as a bander today, what I really remember was how rapidly she trotted up and down the well-worn paths ahead of me with the hip-wiggle of a much more youthful woman. And though *I* was about 25 years younger, I remember being exhausted. Still bright-eyed and vigorous, she wore me out long before the nets were closed for the night.

Helen Quilliam and Robin Chubb examining a bird to be banded.



And she was both modest and independent. The first (and last) time I offered to carry one of the awkward, smelly wooden collecting-boxes she was hauling about, her refusal was clear — she didn't need any help. It was her world, her proficiency. I heard that in one day Ron and Helen "did 400." I inhaled her teachings about banding, identifying, and getting birds untangled from the mist-nets. What a powerful effect she had on me! I think she was pleased to see our birdy enthusiasms develop over the years, but it didn't seem to occur to her that she was the major perpetrator — she waved away thanks and credit and seemed much surprised to find herself in the introduction of my first book.

Later I admired her for her courage in tackling a computer at the stage when they were bulky, obstinate and not at all user-friendly, for never complaining after being reduced and bewildered by the effects of her strokes, and for her continued generosity and consideration for the human race, still supporting causes, still taking friends out to dinner, still serving tea to the cancer patients at the hospital even when she, unknowingly, had become one of them.

Bird Migration at Prince Edward Point, 1977 to 1979, and Today

Allen Keast

I arrived at the old lighthouse at the tip of Prince Edward Point at 5 PM on the weekend of the spring roundup, May 20, 1997. The quest was to relive some of the feeling and excitement of the days from 1977 to 1979 when the Kingston Field Naturalists ran a massive birding operation at the Point. Prince Edward Point, along with Long Point and Point Pelee further west, is one of the great natural funnels along which northward migrating birds move in the spring and depart southwards in the fall. Not only is it the southernmost projection in this part of Ontario but a string of small islands between it and the American shore provide guidance to the night and day migrating birds. Prince Edward Point is very much our Naturalists Club's brainchild and personal hobby — documentation of its importance by Ron Weir, and others, led to designation as a national reserve.

Among my earlier memories of the Club were the weekends of bird banding in the cedar woods and other areas back from the point. In a way Helen Quilliam was my personal "sponsor". I seem to remember I was a little hesitant to go barrelling in taking birds out of the nets with so many experts on hand. But eventually the 'catch' ignomiously 'housed' in little white cloth bags would be brought back to the banding table. Helen Quilliam seemed to spend a disproportionate amount of time at that table — freeing the others for the excitement of finding interesting species in the nets. The bird in its bag would be weighed (and the weight of the bag deducted), then skilled fingers would envelop its little neck while it was subjected to such indignities as being banded and noes made on the degree of moult. The species and, in particular, individual birds responded very differently to handling. One bird would project the image of a bundle of feathered fury — obviously personal distance was important to it. Another would be quite passive and do no more than gaze back at its captor with soulful brown eyes. There was *some* relationship between the "attitude" of a species / individual and its "firepower", to use an air force term. Many are the Rose-breasted Grosbeak scars (were the females the worst? I can't remember) that a bander took home from a weekend at the Point. But the Chickadee (that I feel must have an IQ of about 150), not so well endowed with a powerful beak handled the nonsense in a very cunning way, waiting its opportunity and then launching a ferocious assault on the base of its propagandists's finger nail. How it knew this is about the most vulnerable / sensitive part of the human hand I do not know. It must have inherited it down the evolutionary tree from ancestral contact with the first Neanderthals... certainly the lineage of the Paridae, of which the Chickadee is the best known member is, like its Caucasian attacker, of European descent. You know, maybe Helen Quilliam got the job of handling the birds from the bags because she had unusually deft fingers, or a deep-seated sympathy with Chickadees, or maybe they were tolerant of her because of 20 years of elaborate catering at her feeder. I guess we will never know.

At any event back to my May 1997 personalized pilgrimage to the Old White Lighthouse. I had rationalized that I should be there at sunset, after meeting up with that day's feathered returnees, soak up the atmosphere of the restless waves washing into the gravelly shore, and watch sunset over Timber Island. I would see the dozens of Cliff Swallows safely to bed in their bottle-nests under the eaves of the Lighthouse, and the pond beaver off to his evening activities. Then I would be back well before dawn to see the next day unfold. Alas, we can no longer be accommodated at the Lighthouse which, old, wooden, and frail (if slightly unpainted) seems to have been created a National Shrine by the Parks Service. If, I felt, I could spend the few hours on Sunday morning welcoming and assessing the new overnight arrivals from the south this *surely* would be an exciting reliving of the late 1970's!

So, here I was late on Saturday afternoon at the Point, parked in a slightly waterlogged patch of

'lawn'. Beside me was the rather battered boat shed "full" of Barn Swallow nests. A traditional inspection, at the risk of being splattered with white, revealed a couple of dozen nests in the rafters, perhaps 20 in various stages of construction with the same black mud that I had acquired on my boots from the road. The birds were indeed busy getting as much building done as possible in case the mud supply dried up. They fluttered about my head, swept in from outside almost scalping me, and clung to the nests. The Cliff Swallows with their very different nest style were equally busy. I counted about sixty of their rounded domes that were in various stages of construction — perhaps 40 were complete (on the outside), 13 were as yet unroofed deep cups, and 7 were just starting. I had to concede, though, that they were quite messy. Some of the mud refused to stick to the painted surface so that there were streams of it on the walls below. I felt a need to do a clean-up job on the white wall, just in case some pesky national Parks official should take exception to the desecration of his structure. However, I correctly concluded that with the severe staffing cutbacks that the Service had suffered the work of the swallows would pass unnoticed.

The trees around the lighthouse, spindly, open, as yet leafless, and perhaps only 7 metres tall, were a wonderland of warblers. As I had approached the Point some earlier-visiting members of the Club told me there was a dozen species of warblers at the Point. I was to experience it for myself. I counted, in the next hour, indeed 15 species of warblers and 3 of vireos. They were close-up and intimate, a remarkable sight. The food was a host of tiny chironomids, little Diptera about half the size of the ordinary mosquito that had recently emerged from the waters of the lake, that were spiralling through the air in tight swarms, and then coming to rest on the outermost tips and twigs of the trees, where unfolding bugs provided a resting place and some visual protection. The swallows were harvesting them in the air. The warblers and vireos were "working them over" in the tips of the branches, fluttering, clinging, twisting, and wiggling through the twigs as they fed. I found myself wondering just how many of the tiny chironomids it would take to fill the stomach of a small warbler. But at the rate at which the birds were picking and pecking I suspect they eventually filled their stomachs.

The warblers were so diversified and abundant that I could not write down the order in which I saw and identified the different species even if I had wished to do so — even though there were only a few individuals of each. But I suspect the species hopped in front of me at the rate of something like the following: Yellow Warbler (eye-catching and attracting in its bright gold), Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, Tennessee, Yellow, Nashville, Redstart immature, Blackburnian, Yellow, Canada, Yellow, Blackpoll, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Tennessee, Redstart — brilliantly coloured black-and-red male, Golden-winged, Solitary Vireo, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Magnolia, Yellow-throat in the undergrowth, Nashville, Yellow, Tennessee .... all in the course of twenty minutes.

I vacated the Point at 8:35PM, driving back along the road. A pair of Canada Geese with three goslings scattered from the road-edge, the beaver was busily swimming around his pond, the Spring Peeper frogs were in full voice, a White-throated Sparrow (unusually late in this very late year) sang plaintively, a couple of White-tailed Deer across the road in front of me, some Red-winged Blackbirds uttered harsh cries, a Raccoon eyed me suspiciously and ambled off. At 8:55PM the last Yellow Warbler called, a Song Sparrow uttered a melodious chorus, a Robin scolded the advancing night. And from every little patch of roadside water the voices of a dozen Spring Peeper frogs chorused. At 9:05PM it was quite dark — the frogs had the evening air to themselves.

In the absence of accommodation at the Lighthouse I had bullied my way into staying overnight with Eric Machell and a team of banders from Long Point who were inheriting the Clubs laurels in the area of endeavour. I was back at the Point at 4:30AM, about an hour before sunrise. First songster was the Robin — he chorused long and hard from deep back in the trees. At 4:45 a Catbird scolded nearby. At 4:50 a Yellow Warbler called, a Killdeer piped. At 4:55AM Tree

Swallows appeared and patrolled the shoreline, filling the air with rich melodious twitterings. Barn Swallows started to circle. The Robin scolded and chattered. At 5:03 it was light enough to see the writing on my pad. I sat on the rubble slopes of the lake edge and gazed out over the lake. The waters were calm, still, silent. But heavy banks of clouds were going to deny me the sunrise, just as they had the sunset the night before. The only contribution the rising sun could make to the scene was a narrow line of yellow where a higher and a lower cloudbank met. I was to watch that narrow slit of sunrise expand only ever so slightly, then contact again. A duck (unidentified) suddenly realized my presence and took flight. The nocturnal Spring Peepers and Chorus Frogs were starting to quiet down. At 5:05 a Song Sparrow, who had his nest close by, discovered me and started to sing. Again and again, at fully 6-8 times a minute he sang, warning all and sundry beings in the area that there was an ugly-looking interloper present. The Tree Swallows ceased their patrolling. At 5:10 the Robin was again in full song, the Song Sparrow sang 'ferociously'. At 5:15 the lazy Cliff Swallows finally emerged. They were very preoccupied with their colony, fluttering about the nests, alighting, clinging, entering and sitting with their heads sticking from the entrance. By 5:20 the Barn Swallows were feeding out over the water, dipping and sweeping the surface. A Least Flycatcher began his "kebek, kebek, kebek" call joining the Robin, Sparrow, Catbird, Redwings, and Yellow Warblers in a noisy dawn chorus. At 5:45 the tall clouds assumed golden edges and it became increasingly light. The air seemed full of fluttering and twittering swallows, the woods with singing birds.

And then the Cormorants appeared. Away to the north, far distant, one could see coveys of them on the water. And now they came flying past in long lines and skeins. One group contained two hundred birds, another fifty, a third only a dozen. They all were heading south, past the point and into the deeper areas of Lake Ontario, quite fearless, one group would pass at the distance of few yards, the rest well offshore. There were great groups of them, large black bodies on rapidly beating wings. Here was something completely different to the late 1970's. In those days the Double-crested Cormorant was a rare bird. Now, in 1997, with reduction of colony persecution by the fishermen they are abundant.

Now that it was full light I searched the Point for my warbler friends from the previous evening. They had moved on north during the night. Only present were the "regulars" that were going to stay and breed just here: Yellow Warbler, Least Flycatcher, Robin, Yellow-throat, Redwing, and now a very noisy House Wren.

My duty to the Point and Old Lighthouse done I drove back down the road for an early morning coffee. The Cliff Swallows were extremely busy at their nests — they certainly get great enjoyment from their sociality. The Spring Peepers and the Beaver had gone to bed, but a Woodcock could still be heard.

That morning the nets were full — 250 birds in a few hours after 300 the previous day. Members of the Kingston Field Naturalists arrived at the Point in full force. All were amazed at the great diversity of birds — warblers of 15 and mor species, tanagers, orioles. I had concentrated on my immediate objective and was happy to let the others take over and properly quantify the display. But I had to admit there was an incredible number of warblers. I stood in the woods at one point and no fewer than 5 male Yellow Warblers sang simultaneously in a radius of perhaps 40 metres. This 1997 spring has been an amazing one. Cool temperatures had persisted into the middle of May, and beyond. Only a small proportion of the returnees in each species arrived at the normal time (I noticed this particularly at a study site at Lake Opinicon 50 km further north). Now, all the remainder, perhaps four-fifths of the Yellow Warblers, most of the orioles and grosbeaks and, of course, those returnees that are normally later, the Wood Pewee and Swainson's Thrush, were all coming through in great hordes over just a few days.

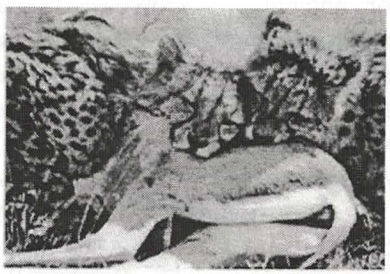
Memorable Moments in Kenya

Faith Avis

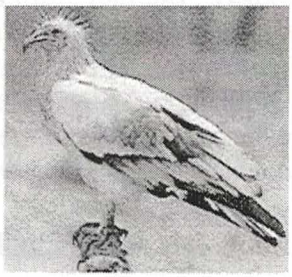
From October 22nd to November 12th, 1982 Helen Quilliam and I were participants in a *Wings* birding trip to Kenya. Our leaders included internationally-known African bird expert Don Turner, and well-known *Wings* bird trip leader Will Russel. Every birding trip produces one or two incredible sightings which remain vividly in the memory for years afterwards. Several of these occurred on this trip.

On our way to the Masai Mara Game Reserve we had two memorable animal encounters.

The first was the late afternoon sighting of a family of wild African Hunting dogs, two adults and two pups having a playtime together at the end of the day. The next day, as we were travelling in the viewing vans across the semi-desert through small herds of wildebeest, we suddenly saw a streak of lightening — a cheetah — hurled herself on a young wildebeest, fasten her jaws on its jugular vein dragging it to the ground where she clung while it struggled until strangled. She hurriedly ripped it open through the anal opening and devoured its entrails in huge gulps. Another cheetah joined her and they gorged themselves, watching nervously all the while for the inevitable approach of lions to deprive them of their hard-earned prey and of the arrival of the scavengers — vultures, jackals and hyenas — all of which did appear. The cheetahs retreated but they had eaten their fill.



The next day we were walking away from the vans in a relatively "safe" area and as Don Turner and I came over a rise we motioned quickly to the others to come up very quietly. There in front of us were two Egyptian Vultures. Vultures are almost always hideous looking birds but the Egyptian Vulture is quite attractive with its white wedge-shaped tail, black flight feathers, bright yellow face and ragged crest. These two birds were engaged in one of the remarkable activities of the bird world — an activity which convinces some observers that they have the power to reason. On the ground in front of them was a huge Ostrich egg and the vultures were taking turns picking up nearby stones, poising themselves above the egg and dropping the stones, hoping to break the shell and enable them to eat the contents of the egg. This is one of several examples of the "use of tools" by bird species.



This trip sighted over 600 bird species — it will always be one of my most memorable experiences.

Notes on Natural History

Helen Quilliam

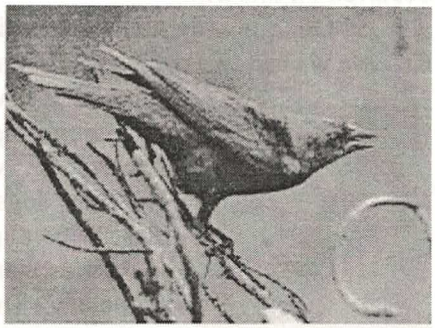
As has been mentioned elsewhere in this issue, Helen Quilliam wrote about the natural history of the Kingston region from 6 July 1959 to 27 November 1968 — a total of 444 columns. On 31 October 1961 the *Kingston Whig Standard* had a feature on Helen and stated "The number of people who gain pleasure and satisfaction from observing birds has grown at a rapid rate in recent years. Not many of them, perhaps, would claim the title of ornithologist, or even admit to being an expert. But they learn as they go and much help comes from the column "Notes on Natural History," written for The Whig Standard by Helen R. Quilliam." To enjoy her writing style and her extensive knowledge we have reprinted 3 of those columns here, starting with issue number 1.

No. 1, July 6, 1959, by Helen R. Quilliam

By July, most birds have their young out of the nest and have only one more care — to feed the fledglings until they are able to fend for themselves. The most dangerous period of the nesting season is when the birds are first leaving the nest, for then they are the easy prey of natural predators and cats. But once they can fly strongly they are ready to meet the hazards which keep adult birds alert at all times. There are, however, one or two species, such as Goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings, which nest a little later than the majority and a few whose first nestlings have not been successful and who will try again. There are also those which often raise a second brood, of which the robin is a good example.

In early July you will see young birds following their parents about begging with wings fluttering to be fed. Although they quickly learn to fly, some of them seem to us very lazy and appear to prefer to wait until choice morsels are brought to them. The young at this stage will be as large as their parents but they can usually be told from them by differences in plumage. The young Grackles, for instance, are easy to recognize because they have not yet acquired the yellow iris of the parents' eyes but have black ones. Although there is plenty of natural food for them, they seem to be very fond of bread crumbs and if there is a birdbath nearby you may see the parents take the bread to the water and dip it there to soften it for themselves and for the young birds.

Not all adult birds will be looking after their own young. Some may be seen feeding a different species of bird. The Brown-headed Cowbird is the villain of the piece for it is the practice of this bird to eschew all duties of a parent, build no nest and rear no young. The female lays her eggs, sometimes only one and sometimes more, in the nest of another bird and departs. More than 149 species of birds have been found on the North American continent to be parasitized by the Cowbird. It is not always the nest of a smaller bird which is chosen, for they have been known to lay eggs in the nests of White-crowned Sparrows, Brown Thrashers, Thrushes, Red-winged Blackbirds and Towhees. However, they are more commonly found in the nests of the smaller birds, the warblers and vireos, and sometimes even the tiny Ruby-crowned Kinglet has been victimized. The Cowbird fledgling is usually most successful in the nest of a smaller species. A bird feeds its young by listening to the cries of the loudest one. A well-fed bird will not demand food and so in a nest of four young each gets its turn by the strength of its demands. As the Cowbird will be larger than the others in the nest, it has the bigger appetite and, since the parent birds seem able to differentiate between the young, the others will suffer at its expense and sometimes die of starvation.



The Yellow Warbler, which is of the small birds most commonly parasitized, has a defence against the Cowbird. It seems to be able to sense when the wrong egg has been laid in its nest and, if it has not already laid an egg of its own, it will build over the intruder a layer of insulating material. This will prevent the warmth of its body reaching the egg thus stopping its development. However, the cowbird is either quick to find this out or to see that the nest is empty and so will lay another egg in it. Yellow Warbler nests have been found with as many as four Cowbird eggs each in its own layer, a deep nest by this time. But if the Yellow Warbler has already begun to lay its own eggs it will not use this defence mechanism and so, in spite of its persistence in covering up the Cowbird eggs the parasite wins in the end. It is then that we see a tiny pair of Yellow Warblers working at top speed to keep full the crop of the huge demanding youngster which follows them about. To us humans it can appear to be nothing short of a tragedy that the little birds must work so hard for another bird not of its own kind and that all its own will have perished at the expense of the stranger. However, family ties in the bird world are of short duration and the young Cowbird, when it can feed itself, will go off to a flock of its kind and the Yellow Warbler will have responded to all the correct impulses, defending its nest, raised and fed a young bird.

Some Yellow Warblers during the season will have raised their full compliment of four young and the cowbirds may have lost some of their eggs which they laid in nests where they were outwitted; and so the balance is maintained. This has been taking place for countless years, and is obviously not a serious threat to any one race or species of birds. Despite this, to us a reprehensible habit, cowbirds will not inherit the birds' earth. We ourselves are more responsible each year for the lessening of bird populations, through the destruction of natural habitat, erection of television towers and ceilometers, fast cars on the road, plate glass windows and the domestic cat. On the credit side man and his settlements have increased some species of birds through the opening up of fields from the forest.

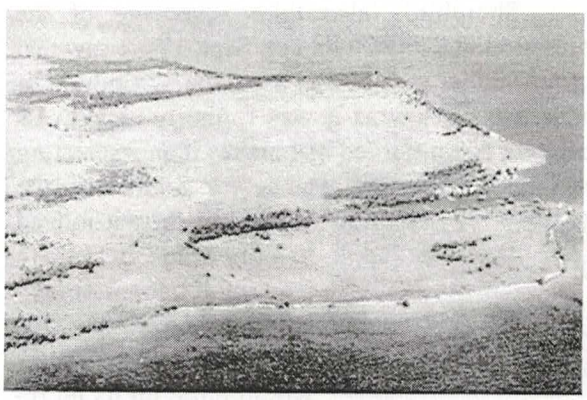
Prince Edward Point, No. 384, Sept. 20, 1967 by Helen R. Quilliam

There are a number of places in Ontario which are exceptionally good spots for watching migration in both spring and autumn. Point Pelee is famous for its spring migration of landbirds, Long Point for its gathering of Whistling Swans in the spring and Hawk Cliff near Port Stanley for its thousands of hawks leaving Canada for the winter in the south. We have a place here which almost rivals them and is certainly one of the best in eastern Ontario — Prince Edward Point, the southeastern most peninsula in Prince Edward County.

In the autumn, birds seeking the shortest passage over the lake funnel down through the Quinte peninsula. On reaching the south shore many turn eastwards until they reach Prince Edward Point. Here if the weather is unfavorable for a crossing of the lake they tend to pile up, forming large aggregations.

The reverse happens in the spring. This place is their first landing place after crossing the lake and if they have been flying in the face of a north wind, they arrive tired and hungry. To understand just how important this place is to migrating birds one has to have an acquaintance with its natural features.

The peninsula is flat, with large open spaces covered with short grass. Rock is very close to the surface and therefore vegetation is sparse. Along the road leading to the end of the point there are dense clusters of cedars as well as strips of deciduous woods. At the end of the point there is a



low-lying swampy section covered with a tangle of cedar, hardwoods and, in places, thick undergrowth.

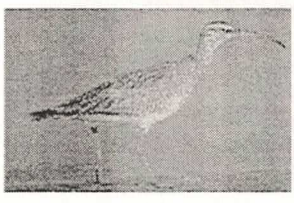
These woods along the road and in the low-lying section serve as resting and feeding places for migrating birds either before crossing the lake or after its journey. At times the trees and bushes are alive with a varied multitude of birds seeking shelter from the winds that sweep the lake and the flat open stretches of the fields. Apart from the protection that these places of shelter give the birds they make first-rate birdwatching places.

Not only do songbirds collect here in large numbers in both spring and autumn but the topography of the peninsula makes it a favorite route for hawks. As the hawks come down from the north and reach the lake they tend to go along the shores and then, striking the shores and then, striking the Quinte peninsula, work along it southwards until they finally come to open water. As I have often pointed out before, hawks prefer to do most of their travel by the aid of thermals.

In these thermals they can spiral to great heights and then glide for long distances to the next thermal. Therefore they tend to follow the shore as long as possible, which bring numbers to them finally to Prince Edward Point. Viewing them at this place also is good because there are large expanses of unbroken fields where the view is unimpeded by trees.

Whereas the number of hawks passing this spot is never as great as in the more famous Hawk Cliff nevertheless we have watched some very good migrations here. On this last weekend weather conditions were not such as to produce a good flight but nevertheless six species of hawks were counted.

Shorebirds also take advantage of the shores around the point and on Sept. 17 we saw that migrant, rather rare in this area, the Whimbrel, or Hudsonian Curlew as it was formerly called. Its great long down-curved bill makes it an interesting bird indeed. This one was at first found near the water but then it moved to a dry field where there was an abundant supply of grasshoppers. This bountiful meal of insects would build up its fat reserves for the long journey to South America. Seven Sanderlings in their almost white winter plumage ran in and out of the waves, busily probing the rocks beneath.



The large open fields have always been good for Black-bellied and Golden Plover, where they mix in flocks with the numerous Killdeer that have collected there from far and wide. In the spring also we have seen large flocks of Dunlin, Dowitchers and Yellowlegs on these same fields where pools of water sometimes collect in a wet spring.

Water Pipits and Palm Warblers find these fields just the places in which to feed on their journey south and at the middle of September they can always be counted on here.

Botanically also Prince Edward Point is interesting. A number of flowering plants have been discovered there whose normal range is in southwestern Ontario and which are rather rare here. Members of the Kingston Field Naturalists usually make at least two expeditions there each year and sometimes more. There is always something of interest — an unusually large number of migrating birds or a rare one or two.

No. 244, July 6, 1964, by Helen R. Quilliam

In this column I have a number of times referred to birds that have been extending their range northwards. It might be well to summarize which of our birds these are. There are good records of what birds were to be seen in the Kingston area in the early 1900's so we do not have t depend on guesswork to know what birds have moved in since then. A few birds have been lost since those days but the larger losses were before 1900 and even these do not match our gains.

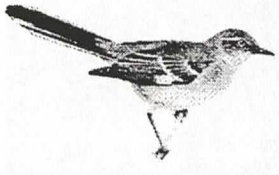
If we take the evidence of a bird-watcher, Edwin Beaupre, who kept records from 1895 to 1930, there is only one bird on his list that we could not expect to find today — the Piping Plover. There is another that he used to find nesting here which probably does not do so today — the Duck Hawk or Peregrine Falcon. However, there are many species that have been seen here in the last 10

years that he never saw.

The biggest changes that have taken place in our bird life have been the numbers of species that have moved in from the south. Because so many of the new birds have come from the south one cannot help but think immediately that climatic changes must have had something to do with it. People talk about the cold, snowy, old fashioned winters of the past. But as memories are not always exact, statistics are a surer way of finding out whether the weather has actually moderated any since the early 1900's. Not only must the winters be considered but the whole year as well. Weather graphs for southeastern Ontario show that we have gone from a mean temperature of 41° in 1890 to a mean temperature of 45° in 1955. This increase in temperature has not been a steady one and there were periods of 10 years at a time when the graph line took a drop. A total rise of four degrees may not mean very much to us but it is very important to animals, insects and birds.

There are now quite a number of birds that are to be found here in the summer that could not have been found on a summer's day in 1900 and these are all birds that are to be found to the south of us — Turkey Vulture, Golden-winged, Prairie and Cerulean Warblers, and the Cardinal. They probably all nest here now but only the nests of the warblers have been found. There is a longer list of birds that have appeared from time to time and that may, therefore, become established in time — Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Hooded Warbler and Orchard Oriole.

The Cardinal and Mockingbird are probably the most spectacular examples of this advance northwards. It is usually young birds that begin to pioneer into new regions. Both these species remain all year round in the areas that they choose as breeding sites and so if the young find there is not much room in the places where they were born, they tend to fan out looking for new places; and if the climate is right they will remain. It is a slow process but if conditions remain favorable the families of these pioneers find plenty of places still vacant and gradually the local population grows. The reason that more Cardinals and Mockingbirds have been seen in the autumn and winter is that it is then that the young are looking for new places to take up residence. For the first time this summer there is a Mockingbird in the area and it has been singing for weeks now. There has been no sign of a mate and we don't know whether it has one but these very bright birds are extremely difficult to see in the summer — almost as if they knew that their brilliant plumage would give them away and so they stay hidden.



The Cattle Egret is another bird that is moving up from the south. This, however, is not quite in the same category as the ones already mentioned for that it is a newcomer to the whole continent. Its spread has been phenomenal and shows no sign yet of having reached its limits.

There have also been newcomers that came for different reasons. Starlings introduced from England and Europe did not appear in Ontario until 1919 and it was not until 1926 that the first eggs and nest were collected at Kingston. Two game birds also were introduced — Grey Partridge and Ring-necked Pheasant.

Other birds have increased greatly in numbers. For example Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles are more numerous than they were 60 years ago. Numbers of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls have increased and Caspian Terns are among the fairly new arrivals as breeding birds. In short, bird-watchers early in the century did not see so many different kinds of birds as we do today.

The Helen Quilliam Memorial Ceremony, Saturday May 10, 1997

Paul Mackenzie

For many members over many years, Helen Quilliam played a pivotal role in the KFN. To express this, the club named her Honorary President, and renamed our Otter Lake Sanctuary as the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary. After her death this past winter, the KFN planned this Memorial Ceremony to be held in the spring at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary. It was held Saturday May 10th at 11:00 AM, and over 50 people attended.

Ann Robertson welcomes members of Helen's family.

As the crowd assembled in the woods, a Northern Waterthrush provided a musical overture. In her warm welcome, KFN President Anne Robertson remarked that the rain had stopped, the black flies were few, and the early flowering sedge was abundant in the open roadside woods selected for the ceremony. Anne introduced several members of KFN who spoke words of remembrance and tribute.

Martin Edwards, world lister, recalled birding trips with Helen to Mexico before published field guides made identification easier. Martin, who has seen species from all the families of birds in the world and is an active conservationist, recalled how Helen recommended preserving land which led to acquiring the first Sanctuary property from Gananoque Light and Power Company. Respect, admiration and affection were among Martin's words of tribute.

Ron Weir, rare bird finder, recalled meeting Helen, Betty Hughes and his first Three-toed Woodpecker along the railway tracks. Prince Edward Point became protected through the efforts of Ron and others who were inspired by her long term vision, in praise of which Ron spoke. Helen's pioneering *History of the Birds of Kingston* became the basis of their writing collaboration and Ron's well known *Birds of the Kingston Region.*

Allen Keast, ornithologist extraordinaire, arrived just in time to recall times spent in front of Helen's picture window which overlooked the ducks migrating along the Cataraqui River. He recalled fine times with Helen at Prince Edward Point during the years of bird banding there. Allen concluded that Helen was an inspiration to us all.

Faith Avis first brought greetings from Nora Mansfield, another close friend of Helen's. Faith, the epitome of loving care, praised the caregivers who attended Helen in her last days at St. Lawrence Place. Faith spoke movingly of those last days, of Ian and Norma Symes' visits, and of the treasure of knowing Helen Quilliam.

Bob Rose, Helen's brother, spoke on behalf of the 12 family members present. He introduced sister Dorothy Griswold, his own wife Nancy, his son Turke, and the Plante family. He thanked the KFN for organizing this Memorial, and especially for dedicating the Sanctuary while she was able to appreciate this. It is a small world, and he related recent connections between Helen and people from New York. Bob then offered a prayer for Helen. As her nephew Turke Rose scattered her ashes along the 4 points of the compass in the sanctuary woods, a Red-shouldered Hawk calling mightily, flew directly over the assembly as if to salute the occasion.

The Ceremony was followed by a BBQ lunch at the "gravel pit" and an opportunity to socialize, and to hike the trials of the sanctuary.

[The photos in this article are from the video that Alan Campeau took of the Memorial Service. If you would like to view the video please contact Alan at 531-1883.]

The 40th Spring Round-up 1997 and Comparisons with the 2nd Spring Round-up 1961

Ron D. Weir

In this special issue of *Blue Bill* devoted to the memory of Helen Quilliam, I thought it would be of interest to incorporate within the summary of the 40th Spring Round-up 1997 some comparisons with the 2nd Spring Round-up 1961 [MH Edwards *Blue Bill* 8: 14-16 (1961)] which Helen described in her Whig Standard column of 5 June 1961. Her column is reprinted in its entirety immediately following the table of results given below for 1997.

On the 1961 Round-up, five parties of 17 birders participated, which included Helen Quilliam. The largest single party total was 111 species of birds and the overall total was 150 species. Quoting from Edwards (1961):

> *With great luck and even more careful coverage of our area, we might one year hit 160 species in a day. We didn't get a Least Bittern, Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Bald Eagle, Turkey, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Screech Owl, Traill's Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Parula Warbler, or a Slate-coloured Junco either last year or this. Some of these are sure to turn up in future years, and this surely adds to the sport of birding. As knowledge and skill increase, the birds we will see get more predictable — but only up to a point! This ultimate unpredictability is one of the most attractive features which adds zest to bird study.*

Since Martin Edwards wrote these comments some 36 years ago, our knowledge of the spring migration in the Kingston region has increased enormously. You will see below that the Round-up species total for 1997 is nearly double that of 1961. Systematic observations and recording the results over many years are essential elements in an ongoing process to increase our knowledge base of bird life in our area. See the article on page 68 regarding the importance of observers submitting their observations at all times of the year for recording on the KFN data files.

The KFN's 40th Spring Round-up took place from 1500h Saturday 24 May 1997 to 1500h Sunday 25 May 1997. Weather conditions were partly cloudy Saturday afternoon with light wind S10kph, 15°C, followed by showers overnight. Sunday was cloudy without wind, but clearing occurred late in the day. Some fog appeared around dawn along the shores of Lake Ontario. Temperatures varied from a high of 14°C along the Lake Ontario shoreline to 23°C inland.

The final tally of species was a record 213, which is above the 24 year (1973-1996) average of 199. Areas visited were Amherst Island, Amherstview Sewage Lagoon, Camden East, Camden Lake, Canoe Lake Road and surrounding areas, Collins Bay and Creek, Gould Lake, Hay Bay areas, Kingston City areas (to include Squaw Point, Lemoines Point, Little Cataraqui Creek), Newburgh, Opinicon Road, Perch River, Perth Road, Prince Edward Point, Point Peninsula, Sydenham area, Wilton Creek, and Wolfe Island.

One species new to the count was the Trumpeter Swan. The cumulative total now stands at 278 species. For a complete tally of the Spring Round-ups from 1960-1991, see *Blue Bill* 39: 28-36 (1992), For 1992-1996, see *Blue Bill* 39: 44-49 (1992), 40: 125-131 (1993), 41: 48-53 (1994), 42: 63-70 (1995), and 43: 70-74 (1996) respectively.

Species unique to a party include the following:

Party #2 - Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Connecticut Warbler;
Party #4 - Saw-whet Owl, Yellow-headed Blackbird;
Party #5 - Great Egret, American Wigeon;
Party #6 - Screech Owl, Rusty Blackbird;
Party #7 - Olive-sided Flycatcher, Hooded Warbler;

Party #8 - Broad-winged Hawk, Louisiana Waterthrush;

Party #10 - Red-throated Loon, Rough-legged Hawk, Sanderling, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Alder Flycatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat .

Other noteworthy statistics for the 40th Round-up include the 2nd ever Yellow-headed Blackbird, 3rd Lesser Black-backed Gull, 4th Snowy Owl (last time in 1975) and 12th Orchard Oriole. The White-eyed Vireo and Hooded Warbler are the 14th and 15th occurrences on spring Round-ups respectively.

Participants were invited to the home of Marian and Joel Ellis for the potluck supper and the species tabulation. Thanks are due to Marian and Joel for being such kind hosts.

Party #1: John and Sean McLaughlin.
Party #2: Bill Cutfield, Marg Hendrick, Dave Williston, Lillian Williston.
Party #3: Faith Avis, Betty Gray, Allen Keast.
Party #4: Alex and Janet Scott.
Party #5: Erwin Batalla, Alexandra Batalla, Sharon David.
Party #6: Lynn Bell, Joel Ellis, Peter Good, Kathy Innis.
Party #7: Ken, Kenneth, Mary Edwards, Nils Moller.
Party #8: Andrew Cirtwell, Kurt Hennige, Basia Lodzinski, Bud Rowe, Bob Sachs, Gary Ure.
Party #9: Shirley Paul, Gerald Paul, Barb & Rob Frewin.
Party #10: Martin Edwards, Hugh Evans, Bob Stewart, Ron Weir.
Miscellaneous M: Bird banders at P.E.Pt.; Chris Grooms

The Art Bell Trophy was won by Party #10 for the highest species total of 170. This award was inaugurated in 1992 to commemorate the memory of Art Bell, who was a life-long member of the KFN and a keen participant in the Spring and Fall Round-ups since their inception. The Purple Vulture Award, that humourous papier maché model representing no living creature currently on this earth, was won by the runner up Party #6 with its 167 species. The leader of Party #6 will not reveal where the award will be displayed until it can (hopefully) be given to someone else as the runner up at the 1997 Fall Roundup.

The totals in the following table have had known duplications removed so that the total individuals for a species may not equal the sum of the contributions from each party.

TABLE 1: Summary of species for the 40th Spring Round-up 1997

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS											
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	M	TOT
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Common Loon	x	4	-	10	x	30	x	12	1	31	-	75
Pied-billed Grebe	-	5	-	5	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	12
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	4
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	10
Double-crested Cormorant	x	200	2	200	x	1500	x	400	90	700	-	1700
American Bittern	-	6	-	2	1	5	-	6	2	20	-	42
Least Bittern	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5
Great Blue Heron	x	15	3	12	x	25	x	15	4	10	-	85
Great Egret	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Green Heron	x	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	10	-	12
Black-Crowned Night Heron	-	1	-	6	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	11

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS											
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	M	TOT
Mute Swan	-	3	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Trumpeter Swan	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Brant	x	-	-	500	40	200	75	x	500	4000	-	4500
Canada Goose	x	150	1	200	x	50	x	50	60	225	-	600
Wood Duck	x	7	1	7	-	10	-	5	-	1	-	31
Green-winged Teal	x	-	-	5	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	10
American Black Duck	x	-	-	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	5
Mallard	x	25	-	100	x	35	x	20	14	70	-	255
Northern Pintail	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
Blue-winged Teal	x	6	-	15	x	10	x	12	1	2	-	46
Northern Shoveler	x	1	-	2	x	8	1	3	2	4	-	21
Gadwall	x	10	-	30	x	12	3	10	12	30	-	105
American Wigeon	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Greater Scaup	x	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	6	-	11
Lesser Scaup	x	-	-	4	1	2	-	2	6	4	-	19
Oldsquaw	x	-	-	2	-	50	25	-	4	500	-	500
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	1	-	500	10	200	1	3300	-	3500
Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	1	1	15	-	-	-	2	-	19
Bufflehead	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	3	3	3	-	14
Hooded Merganser	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	5
Common Merganser	-	-	-	4	-	3	1	15	-	4	-	27
Red-breasted Merganser	x	-	-	30	-	50	15	12	-	250	-	350
Turkey Vulture	x	10	-	-	1	5	1	2	1	1	-	21
Osprey	x	10	2	3	10	3	1	2	2	2	-	35
Northern Harrier	-	5	-	6	1	4	1	10	-	10	-	37
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	5
Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	4	-	-	-	7
Broad-winged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	-	5	-	2	x	2	2	1	-	2	-	14
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
American Kestrel	x	4	-	3	-	6	1	2	1	5	-	22
Ring-necked Pheasant	x	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Ruffed Grouse	x	2	-	-	4	2	2	7	1	6	-	22
Wild Turkey	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5
Virginia Rail	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	2	4	10	-	22
Sora	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	-	10	-	16
Common Moorhen	x	3	-	5	x	-	-	2	-	1	-	11
Black-bellied Plover	-	-	-	11	-	20	-	4	-	-	-	35
Semipalmated Plover	x	2	-	10	2	5	3	71	6	10	-	109
Killdeer	x	15	3	30	x	40	x	35	31	60	-	220
Greater Yellowlegs	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Lesser Yellowlegs	-	-	-	6	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	11
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Spotted Sandpiper	x	4	3	30	x	75	x	25	16	100	-	250

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS											
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	M	TOT
Upland Sandpiper	-	1	-	6	-	4	2	6	-	4	-	22
Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	6	-	7	-	4	5	-	-	22
Red Knot	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	-	2	-	-	152
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper	x	-	-	4	-	2	1	30	3	6	-	46
Least Sandpiper	x	2	-	12	8	10	3	50	1	115	-	199
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	7	1	30	-	41
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	3
Dunlin	x	2	-	1000	8	300	15	550	620	3	-	1800
Short-billed Dowitcher	x	-	-	11	-	2	-	11	2	25	-	50
Common Snipe	x	10	-	20	x	15	1	30	4	25	-	105
American Woodcock	-	-	-	6	4	-	1	8	-	1	-	20
Wilson's Phalarope	x	-	-	11	-	16	-	16	12	25	-	25
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	6	-	10	-	-	-	15	-	31
Ring-billed Gull	x	50	6	100	x	200	x	150	50	11000	-	11500
Herring Gull	x	10	2	50	x	50	x	25	14	45	-	200
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	x	3	-	12	x	3	x	1	4	6	-	29
Caspian Tern	x	6	3	20	x	10	2	50	9	100	-	190
Common Tern	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4
Black Tern	x	30	-	200	3	5	5	30	7	70	-	350
Rock Dove	x	20	x	5	x	3	x	4	30	6	-	70
Mourning Dove	x	15	8	40	x	75	x	40	35	35	-	240
Black-billed Cuckoo	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Eastern Screech Owl	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Great Horned Owl	-	1	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	7
Snowy Owl	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Barred Owl	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	3
Long-eared Owl	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	7
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Nighthawk	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Whip-poor-will	x	-	-	2	-	5	-	1	-	1	-	9
Chimney Swift	x	6	-	3	x	5	x	5	-	6	-	25
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x	4	2	7	x	6	6	5	1	25	-	56
Belted Kingfisher	x	7	2	3	-	5	2	4	-	4	-	27
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	4
Downy Woodpecker	x	2	1	5	1	5	x	4	1	3	-	22
Hairy Woodpecker	x	4	1	1	-	2	x	2	-	1	-	11
Northern Flicker	x	12	4	9	x	5	x	5	6	15	-	56
Pileated Woodpecker	x	3	1	-	-	2	-	8	-	-	-	14
Olive-sided Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Eastern Wood Pewee	x	-	1	2	-	4	5	4	2	30	-	48

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS											
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	M	TOT
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	3	-	9
Alder Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Willow Flycatcher	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	-	8
Least Flycatcher	x	6	1	2	x	20	30	100	10	40	-	210
Eastern Phoebe	x	4	x	7	x	6	2	4	5	20	-	48
Great-crested Flycatcher	x	15	x	2	x	10	8	5	1	30	-	71
Eastern Kingbird	x	25	x	50	x	100	x	40	33	75	-	323
Horned Lark	-	5	-	5	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	13
Purple Martin	x	20	-	15	x	12	x	30	55	150	-	282
Tree Swallow	x	x	x	100	x	100	x	200	60	170	-	630
N. Rough-winged Swallow	x	2	x	40	x	100	x	5	1	100	-	245
Bank Swallow	x	1	-	2	x	5	-	10	4	5	-	27
Cliff Swallow	x	2	-	-	-	100	x	300	150	500	-	800
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	20	x	50	x	40	40	200	-	350
Blue Jay	x	15	x	10	x	25	15	60	4	25	-	155
American Crow	x	42	8	20	x	15	1	25	15	20	-	145
Common Raven	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3
Black-capped Chickadee	x	12	5	40	x	10	x	10	1	15	-	93
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	3	-	8
White-beasted Nuthatch	x	2	2	5	x	2	1	-	-	-	-	12
Brown Creeper	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	4
Carolina Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
House Wren	x	18	7	20	x	10	x	8	1	60	-	124
Winter Wren	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	6
Sedge Wren	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
Marsh Wren	-	7	2	10	x	3	-	4	-	8	-	34
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	x	-	x	8	-	10	3	2	1	20	-	44
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	x	-	1	-	-	2	x	10	2	3	-	18
Eastern Bluebird	-	1	-	-	1	2	4	1	-	-	-	9
Veery	-	3	-	6	3	12	10	20	1	35	-	90
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	1	1	10	2	2	-	3	-	19
Swainson's Thrush	x	-	1	18	5	15	20	15	8	80	-	162
Hermit Thrush	x	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	2	1	-	8
Wood Thrush	x	15	1	12	4	30	6	20	3	25	-	116
American Robin	x	x	20	75	x	150	x	40	95	2100	-	2400
Gray Catbird	x	30	8	20	x	75	x	20	25	80	-	258
Northern Mockingbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	3
Brown Thrasher	x	6	-	12	x	20	x	10	3	35	-	86
American Pipit	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	6
Cedar Waxwing	x	3	-	-	x	100	10	60	4	250	-	427
Loggerhead Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	9	11
Starling	x	x	15	100	x	20	x	30	50	x	-	215
White-eyed Vireo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
Solitary Vireo	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	5

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS											
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	M	TOT
Yellow-throated Vireo	-	2	-	-	-	5	-	4	1	-	-	12
Warbling Vireo	x	18	2	6	x	80	x	20	21	65	-	212
Philadelphia Vireo	x	-	1	2	-	10	1-	1	2	45	-	62
Red-eyed Vireo	x	4	4	4	x	20	20	20	12	60	-	144
Blue-winged Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3
Golden-winged Warbler	-	3	x	-	-	10	4	10	3	-	-	30
Tennessee Warbler	-	1	x	-	-	3	5	4	1	15	-	30
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
Nashville Warbler	x	3	1	3	-	30	20	40	6	75	-	178
Northern Parula	x	2	-	3	1	1	6	8	-	50	-	71
Yellow Warbler	x	x	24	50	x	250	x	100	138	2500	-	2900
Chestnut-sided Warbler	x	4	3	12	x	150	20	50	46	325	-	610
Magnolia Warbler	x	5	4	20	x	35	25	100	36	1100	-	1325
Cape May Warbler	x	1	1	-	-	5	6	20	5	41	-	78
Black-throated Blue Warbler	x	3	4	8	x	20	30	50	30	350	-	495
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x	5	3	50	x	50	75	100	29	375	-	679
Black-throated Green Warbler	x	3	x	6	-	20	15	30	4	310	-	388
Blackburnian Warbler	x	1	1	2	x	10	6	20	13	160	-	213
Pine Warbler	x	2	x	-	-	3	-	5	-	-	-	25
Prairie Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	2	x	4	1	1	5	25	-	38
Bay-breasted Warbler	x	2	x	2	-	6	15	10	2	65	-	102
Blackpoll Warbler	-	2	-	-	-	6	6	5	2	20	-	41
Cerulean Warbler	-	1	-	-	-	15	1	4	1	2	-	24
Black-and-white Warbler	x	9	2	9	x	15	12	6	3	25	-	81
American Redstart	x	7	2	10	x	40	25	50	28	500	-	662
Ovenbird	x	10	1	1	x	40	6	8	1	21	-	88
Northern Waterthrush	x	4	-	-	x	10	2	10	-	1	-	27
Louisiana Waterthrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Connecticut Warbler	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mourning Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	2	1	4	-	12
Common Yellowthroat	x	15	-	30	x	40	x	30	10	210	-	375
Hooded Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Wilson's Warbler	x	3	-	15	x	12	12	6	7	70	-	125
Canada Warbler	x	1	-	2	x	1	15	2	3	40	-	64
Yellow-breasted Chat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Scarlet Tanager	-	6	-	2	x	10	15	15	1	50	-	99
Northern Cardinal	x	1	8	4	x	2	x	5	3	6	-	30
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x	23	1	20	x	30	10	30	9	35	-	158
Indigo Bunting	x	5	-	1	-	12	6	5	1	2	-	32
Eastern Towhee	x	11	-	10	-	30	x	10	1	30	-	92
Chipping Sparrow	x	x	7	6	x	15	x	80	35	300	-	443
Field Sparrow	x	2	-	4	-	10	2	10	-	30	-	58
Vesper Sparrow	x	2	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	6
Savannah Sparrow	x	24	-	40	x	10	x	40	5	150	-	269

SPECIES	PARTY NUMBERS											
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	M	TOT
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	1	-	-	6	-	-	2	5	3	-	17
Henslow's Sparrow	-	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Song Sparrow	x	25	6	20	x	20	x	60	13	225	-	369
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	10	6	3	1	11	-	31
Swamp Sparrow	x	6	-	15	x	6	x	5	1	75	-	108
White-throated Sparrow	x	5	-	4	x	12	25	25	2	100	-	173
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	20	x	25	20	6	4	20	-	95
Bobolink	x	x	-	200	x	150	x	40	42	300	-	730
Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	12	200	x	500	x	100	150	2000	-	2950
Eastern Meadowlark	x	30	-	50	x	30	x	5	6	35	-	156
Yellow-headed Blackbird	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Grackle	x	x	16	60	x	50	x	30	60	500	-	716
Brown-headed Cowbird	x	15	3	100	x	75	x	20	8	60	-	281
Orchard Oriole	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	4
Baltimore Oriole	x	18	35	15	x	30	20	30	7	60	-	215
Purple Finch	-	3	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	10	-	16
House Finch	x	5	10	8	x	4	x	4	5	30	-	66
Pine Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
American Goldfinch	x	x	21	100	x	50	x	40	23	70	-	304
House Sparrow	x	7	8	20	x	10	x	10	25	100	-	180
TOTAL SPECIES	117	132	72	143	105	167	131	166	122	170		213
PARTICIPANTS	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	6	4	4	1	37

Notes on Natural History
No. 88, June 5, 1961

Helen Quilliam

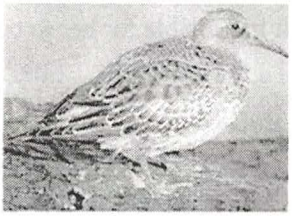
Yearly List No. 13: A record of birds seen and reported for the first time during the year within a 30-mile radius of Macdonald Park, Kingston; (197) Least Bittern, 1, May 27, A.E.B.; (198) Purple Sandpiper, 1, May 28, K.N.C.; (199) Least Sandpiper, 2, May 28, K.N.C.; (200) Semi-palmated Sandpiper, 2, K.N.C.; (201) Sanderling, May 28, K.N.C.; (202) Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 1, May 28, K.N.C.; (203) Cliff Swallow, 15, May 28, K.N.C.; (204) Prairie Warbler, 6, May 28, A.M.S.

On May 28, members of the Kingston Nature Club conducted a dawn to dusk survey of the birds within our 30-mile area. Five parties set out well before sunrise to cover as many different sorts of habitat as possible — fields, marshes, swamps, wooded areas and water. Several parties found more than a hundred species and the grand total for all parties was 148 species. Many clubs in Canada and the United States choose a day in May when they believe they will find the greatest number of species. In the beginning this was called making a "century run", trying to find 100 species in one day. Nowadays, however, with all the modern aids which we have, many localities exceed the 100 mark easily. Binoculars are much improved and telescopes help to identify birds far out on the water or on an inaccessible spit. Recordings of bird songs have helped greatly in locating species. One has a chance to learn those songs which sometimes take years to recognize because they are heard only

once or twice a year in the field.

Starting before dawn the list is begun with those birds which are often easier to hear than to see — Woodcock, Snipe, Whip-poor-will, Bittern, and Thrushes. As the light strengthens the dawn chorus becomes bewildering in its variety and Robin, Song Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Brown Thrasher and many more are quickly added to the list. Then comes the serous business of ferreting out those species which are not easily recognized by song or which are not singing. Much of the success of such an expedition lies in the careful covering of every type of habitat.

Some of the birds on the above list were found for the first time during the year on this day. In this group were shorebirds which are among the last of the migrants to go through our area in the spring. We have on this list one which has never before been reported from this area — the purple sandpiper. It is a shorebird which more normally migrates along the Atlantic coast to the far north. it has an affinity for rocky wave-swept shores where it feeds on tiny marine animals. It is one of the darkest of the sandpipers almost invisible as it creeps about dark rocks. The one on our list was found on a rocky shore of Wolfe Island, carefully seen and described by four members of the Kingston Nature Club.



Cliff Swallows had arrived earlier than the date given above but members of the club had not located a colony until May 28. These swallows are quickly identified by their square tails, white on the forehead, chestnut-colored throat and buffy-colored rump. Even fifty years ago we find that colonies of them were not very common and that for inexplicable reasons they would abandon a barn which they had been using for years. This year we found two colonies, one of them having been reported to us by the owner of a farm. Their bottle, or retort-shaped nests, had already been built under the eaves of house and barn.

Although 21 species of warblers were found on May 28 only one of these was new to the list. This was a colony of Prairie Warblers which for the past few years has been found in the same place every year. We have known of only one or two locations of these pretty warblers in recent years for they are not one of the more numerous types of warblers and are rather particular about the sort of place which they choose to build their nests. They seem to have a certain communal sense. They are not found to be nesting individually over a large area but rather close together in a confined area.

One of the most unusual birds found on this May trip was a Snowy Owl still on Amherst Island. Snowy Owls begin returning to the north at the end of March and it is unusual to see one by the middle of April. The last on Wolfe Island was seen May 28. It might be of interest to readers to know that the Kingston Nature Club on its Christmas Bird Count found more Snowy Owls (15) in its territory than any other club in Canada or the United States. We also found more Glaucous Gulls (25) than any other locality. It was the third year in which we had found more of these large all-white gulls and the second year in which we had had the highest count of Snowy Owls. It is interesting that apparently we have the type of terrain and stretches of water which are more favorable to these two very different winter birds than anywhere on the continent.

The flood of migrants is just about over and many of the early arrivals already have their first young out of the nests. For the others nesting is at its height and our attention in the succeeding weeks will be turned to what birds are breeding in this area, what their success is and how abundant they appear to be.

Bird Records of the Kingston Field Naturalists

Ron D. Weir

The file of bird records for the Kingston Field Naturalists originated in 1948 when the late Dr. George Stirrett wrote down the dates when and the places where he saw various species throughout the year within the Kingston area. The growth in membership of the fledgling Kingston Nature Club, as it was known then, brought more information on birds sightings. Helen Quilliam recognised that it was necessary to keep the information in an orderly way and she organized the information of sightings on recipe cards with one card per species for each year. As members of the KFN reported the information to Helen about common species, both sides of the species card would be filled by year's end with a line for each sighting to contain number of birds, location and observers. For other species especially the unusual ones, only one or two line entries may appear on each card in a given year. As each new year commenced, the whole process started again using blank recipe cards. It is this process of starting afresh each year that led to birding intensely on New Year's day to be the first person to find and report species to the KFN bird records. It is from the KFN card file that the information is gathered to prepare the yearly species list which is published in the March issue of the *Blue Bill.*

As the years passed and the number of cards increased for each species, patterns of consistent first arrival dates or last departure dates began to emerge. When a particular site was visited on a regular basis and the sightings reported to the KFN file, one can identify sudden abundances followed by a sudden paucity of birds at that site as the waves of arriving migrants appear for a few days, only to vanish again as they migrate. This is most easily seen for the common species as there are many records. Careful observation of the plumages allows identification of the sex and often the age group of the migrants. It was using this technique we were able to show that for southward migration of waders/shorebirds through Kingston, adults arrive first during late July and August followed by young of the year during September and October. Whether the observations are made by an individual observer alone or by a group on a field trip or via the composite results of Christmas Counts, Spring and Fall Round-ups, the result is the same: accurate factual data for the database on the card files.

In 1965, Helen published the book *History of the Birds of Kingston* and she used the KFN records as her database. Her book enabled her and us to identify the species for which our knowledge was limited. As a result, studies were undertaken by KFN members to get some of the answers. In 1973, she revised her first edition and added significant information acquired over eight years. Many more census studies, banding research and work for the *Breeding Bird Atlas of Ontario* were carried out over the next 16 years by KFN members. The results were recorded on the KFN files and led to my writing *Birds of the Kingston Region*, published in 1989. Unfortunately Helen's deteriorating health made it impossible for her to be a coauthor.

I have written this note about the KFN bird files in order to remind us of the importance for members to submit their observations. The file is the database for writing articles, books, briefs as well as special submissions to agencies such as OMB hearings, Canadian Wildlife Service and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

You are encouraged to send in your sightings, which can be done in one of several ways depending upon your preferences. You can telephone Joel Ellis at 546-7280 or send him the written list by post (Joel is the official keeper of the card file for the current year), telephone me at 549-5274 or another member of the Executive, send the records by e-mail to me (weirr@rmc.ca) or another member of the Executive. The KFN telephone line at 549-8023 has been set up recently to provide members with up-to-date information on nature happenings in general and bird sightings in particular and to provide another mechanism by which you can submit your own sightings to the Club.

Return and Departure Dates of Some Common Species: Kingston Field Naturalists' Club Banding Data

Allen Keast

The Club assembled a massive data set on return and departure dates of perhaps a hundred bird species during the 1977 to 1979 period of intense banding effort. It was truly a team project with a couple of dozen members and some summer staff taking part. The accompanying diagrams have been assembled from the Club records supplied by Helen Quilliam. I limit it to a cross-set of warblers. The birds were identified as adults, males and females separately where this could be done, and hatch year birds.

The paruline warblers are preceded by the two kinglets, the Golden-crowned that was obtained in smaller numbers, being caught in mid to late April (Figure 1). The bulk of the Ruby-crowned Kinglets were taken in late April and early May, the adult males, hastening north to secure breeding territories first (Figure 2). In the autumn the kinglets were late departees, going southwards in October after all the warblers, except the Yellow-rumped, had left. The kinglets winter further north than most warblers.

Amongst the common breeding warblers near Kingston, the bulk of the Yellow Warblers were taken in the middle of May (Figure 3). After the great surge of migrators remaining behind was a smaller nucleus of birds that summer on the Point. The return movement of Yellow Warblers proved to extend from late July until late August.

Ovenbirds moved north also in May but the bulk returned later — late August and early September (Figure 4). Black-and-White Warblers went north mainly between May 5th and 18th, and south in late August to early September (Figure 5). Blackburnian Warblers that winter in the highlands of mainland South America were later spring returnees — last half of May, and returning south in late August (Figure 6). The Tennessee Warbler that breeds near Hudson's Bay goes north in late May and south in August (Figure 7).

The Yellow-rumped Warbler, only some of which remain to breed in the Kingston area, was netted mostly in the first half of May, but with a few still being taken late in the month (Figure 8). Yellow-rumps had the most protracted and latest southward movement of all the warblers — late August to October. Some Yellow-rumps winter as far south as Belize but most of the wintering population is strung out down the eastern section of the United States from New Jersey southwards. It would indeed be interesting to know of the degree of correlation between passage times and wintering area in individual Yellow-rumped Warblers, e.g. are the latest departees the ones that winter in the Carolinas? This matter will have to be resolved in the future.

The Blackpoll Warbler, that is one of the most southern wintering species — being found in the Amazon basin and elsewhere in winter — was found, as would be expected, to be about the last warbler to come through the Point, the bulk being caught in late May (Figure 9). It departs in September.

Finally, the American Redstart, with a protracted wintering area from Florida to the West Indies and mainland South America, came through in large numbers in the last two-thirds of May and went south in the last half of August and early September (Figure 10).

The histograms bring out a series of interesting features about the movement of the birds through Prince Edward Point. Commonly much fewer birds are taken in the spring than in the autumn. This is because of the generally appreciated phenomenon of rapid northward passage in springtime because the birds are anxious to get back to breeding grounds and territories, now that a huge diversity of food and benign conditions are suddenly available. The return migration in the fall is, and can be, a much more leisure affair.

The autumn migrants are, of course, dominated by young-of-the-year birds — the progeny of the summer's breeding. These are readily distinguishable from the adults in a variety of features.

A further feature of the migration is that, in many species, the males pass through going north ahead of the females. It is they that have to acquire and set up the breeding territories. This Kingston Field Naturalist's Club data set also shows a tendency for young-of-the-year (or *hatch year*) birds to go south in the autumn slightly ahead of the adults. They are also obviously inexperienced. A high proportion of the warbler "kills" at the Lennox and Addington Power Generating Station in the autumn were found by Ron Weir to be hatch-year birds.

With the woods at the tip of Prince Edward Point now secured by the Club and Parks Service as a reserve we can look forward to enjoying its spring and autumn migration delights well into the future. It will undoubtedly also be an invaluable area for the future monitoring of our bird populations as they are increasingly stressed by land-clearing in their wintering grounds and economic development in the north.

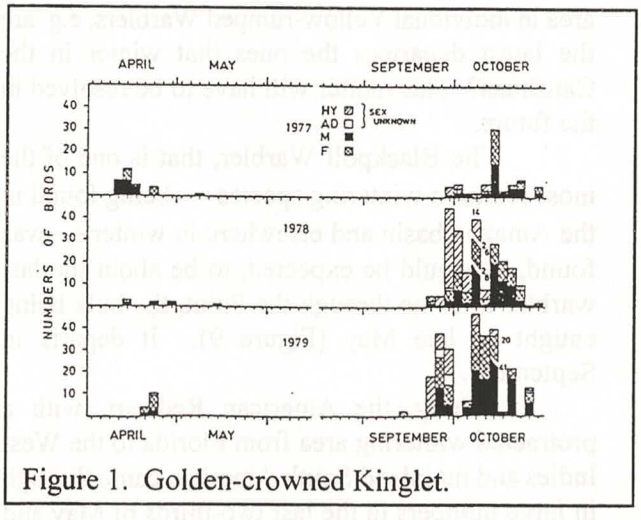


Figure 1. Golden-crowned Kinglet.

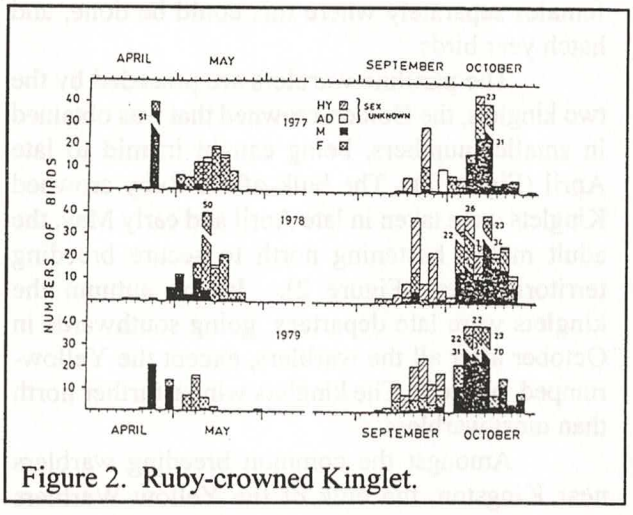


Figure 2. Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

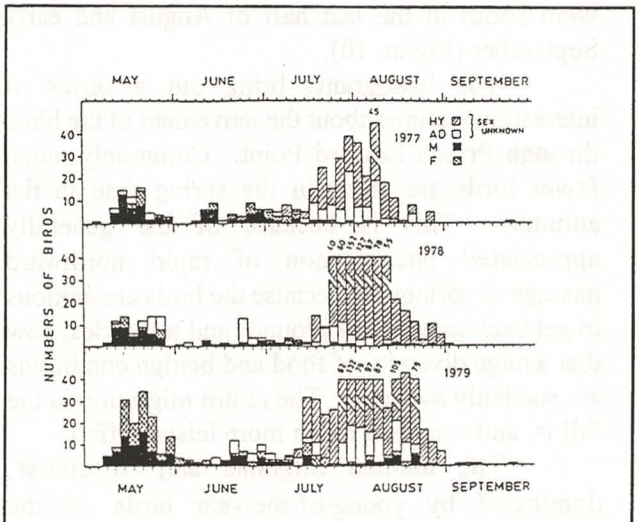


Figure 3. Yellow Warbler.

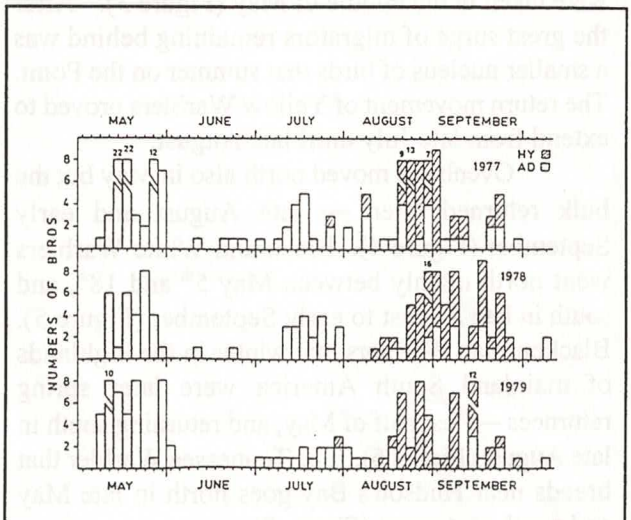


Figure 4. Ovenbird.

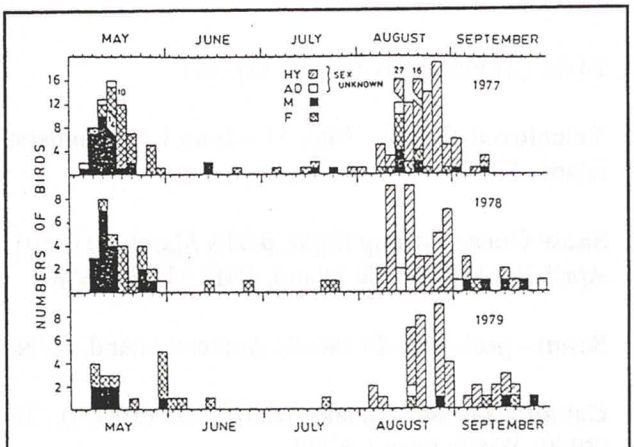


Figure 5. Black-and-white Warbler.

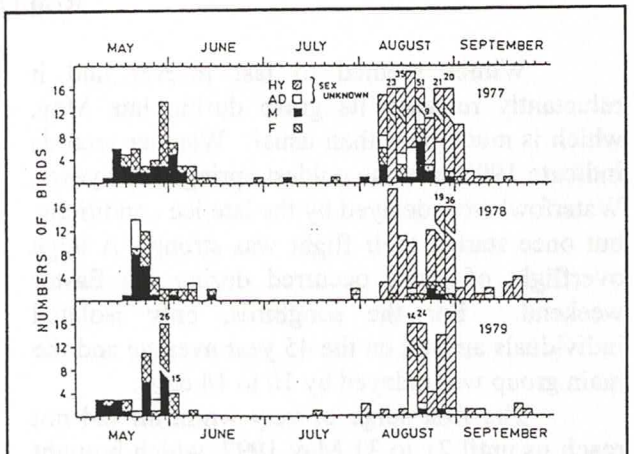


Figure 6. Blackburnian Warbler.

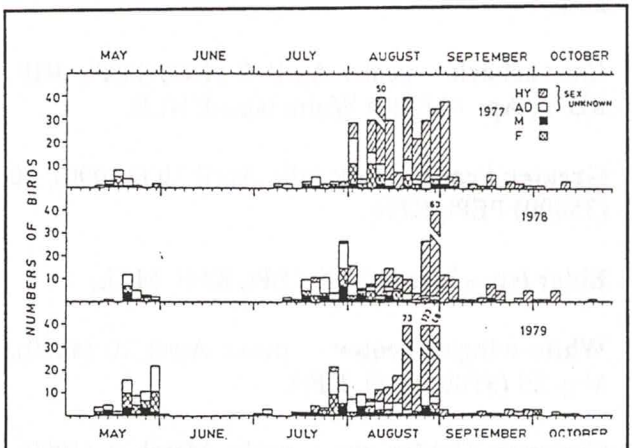


Figure 7. Tennessee Warbler.

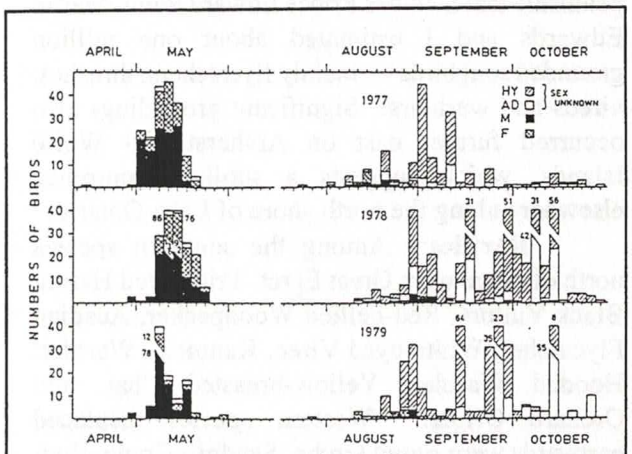


Figure 8. Yellow-rumped Warbler.

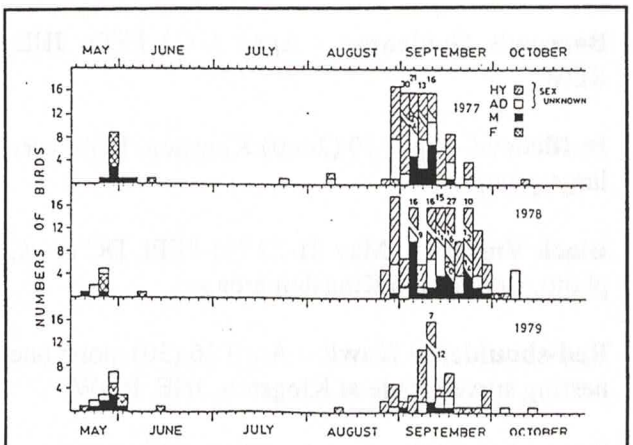


Figure 9. Blackpoll Warbler.

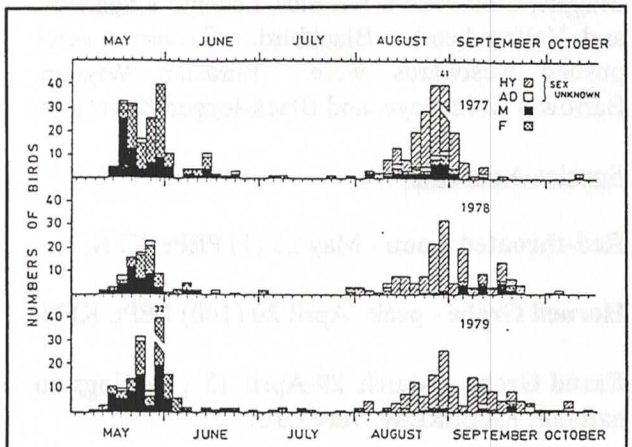


Figure 10. American Redstart.

Spring Season, 1 March - 31 May 1997

Ron D. Weir

Winter seemed to last forever and it reluctantly released its grasp during late May, which is much later than usual. Weather records indicate 1997 was the coldest spring in 80 years. Waterfowl were delayed by the late ice conditions, but once started their flight was strong. A huge overflight of geese occurred during the Easter weekend. For the songbirds, only isolated individuals arrived on the 45 year average and the main group was delayed by 10 to 14 days.

The first surge of very warm air did not reach us until 21 to 31 May 1997, which brought the greatest influx of songbirds. During the 7 hours after sunrise 25 May 1997 along the 5 km of peninsula that includes Prince Edward Point, Martin Edwards and I estimated about one million grounded songbirds — mainly flycatchers, thrushes, vireos and warblers! Significant groundings also occurred further east on Amherst and Wolfe Islands, which suggests a similar occurrence elsewhere along the north shore of Lake Ontario.

Rarities: Among the southern species north of range were Great Egret, Tricolored Heron, Black Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole. Western species displaced eastwards were Eared Grebe, Sandhill Crane, Red-necked Phalarope, Forster's Tern, Black-billed Magpie, Connecticut Warbler, Leconte's Sparrow, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Eastern species pushed westwards were Eurasian Wigeon, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Black-legged Kittiwake.

Species Accounts:

Red-throated Loon - May 25 (1) PEPt, KFN.

Horned Grebe - peaks April 20 (100) PEPt, KFN.

Eared Grebe - March 29-April 13 (1) Kingston harbour, RKE, RDW, very rare.

Great Egret -May 8 (1) Gananoque, J. Haig, May 24-25 (2) Perch River, AB, EB, SD.

Tricolored Heron - May 31 - June 1 (1) Amherst Island, KFN.

Snow Goose - strong flight, peaks March 30 (150), April 29 (430) Wolfe Island, JHE, MTE, DVW.

Brant - peak May 24 (4000) Amherst Island, KFN.

Canada Goose - peaks March 28 (10000), 30 (8000) Wolfe Island, KFN.

Eurasian Wigeon - April 24 (1 male) Kingston, DM.

Canvasback - peaks April 5 (600) PEPt, JHE, RDW; Apr 16 (200) Wolfe Island, NLB.

Greater Scaup - peak rafts April 10 (13000), 20 (35000) PEPt, KFN.

Eider (sp) - March 2 (1) PEPt, KFE, MCE.

White-winged Scoter - peaks April 20 (4000), May 25 (3500) PEPt, KFN.

Common Goldeneye - peaks March 2 (1000), April 5 (1000) PEPt, JHE, RDW.

Barrow's Goldeneye - April 5 (1) PEPt, JHE, RDW.

Bufflehead - April 10 (2000) Kingston, RBS, very large group.

Black Vulture - May 21-22 (1) PEPt, DC *et al.*, photo, first for the Kingston area.

Red-shouldered Hawk - April 26 (30) along one nesting survey route at Kingston, JHE, RDW.

Rough-legged Hawk - May 25 (1) PEPt, KFN, late bird.

Red Knot - peak May 25 (150) Adolphustown Lennox & Addington KFN.

White-rumped Sandpiper - peak May 24 (30) Amherst Island, KFN, unusual for the high number in spring.

Dunlin - peak May 25(1000) Amherst Island, KFN.

Red-necked Phalarope - May 28 (1) Amherst Island, AS.

Little Gull - May 4 (2 adults) PEPt, KFN.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - May 24 (1 adult) Amherst Island KFN, British race *graelsii*.

Glaucous Gull - May 23(1) Kingston, RDW, late.

Black-legged Kittiwake - March 17-18 (1) Kingston, B. Furnell; this bird was found grounded in the City, was picked up and taken to Avian Care where it died due to starvation.

Forster's Tern - May 14 (1) Kingston, RDW.

Snowy Owl - May 25 (1) PEPt, KFN, late.

Short-eared Owl - March 30 to May 31 (about 14 some of which are nesting), Kingston, KFN.

Red-headed Woodpecker - May 21-22 (1) Kingston, R. Walmsley, only record!!!!

Red-bellied Woodpecker - May 13-31 (7), Kingston, KFN, good showing.

Acadian Flycatcher - May 31(1) PEPt, JHE, RDW.

Cliff Swallow - extremely high numbers nesting, May 25 (800), Kingston area, KFN.

Black-billed Magpie - April 20 (1) PEPt, *fide* EM, migrant, our 3rd ever and 2nd consecutive spring at PEPt.

Red-breasted Nuthatch - March 19 to May 25, light return passage, PEPt, KFN.

Gray-cheeked Thrush - May 24/25 1st heavy night flight over PEPt & Kingston, KFN; May 25 (dozens grounded) PEPt, KFN.

Swainson's Thrush - May 24/25 as per Gray-cheeked Thrush; May 25 (100s grounded) PEPt, KFN.

Northern Mockingbird - May 22-25 (3) PEPt, KFN, 26 (1) Kingston, DVW.

Brown Thrasher - peak May 11 (75) PEPt, JHE, RDW.

Bohemian Waxwing - last ones March 26 (5), April 11 (40) Westport Leeds, RSachs,RKE.

Loggerhead Shrike - April 15-May 31 (13 nesting pairs) Kingston area, C. Grooms.

White-eyed Vireo - May 23 (1) Kingston, WM, 25 (1) PEPt, RDW, both males, rare but regular.

Philadelphia Vireo - peak May 25 (60!) PEPt, KFN.

Blue-winged Warbler - May 18-25 (5) PEPt, KFN.

Northern Parula - peak May 25 (70) PEPt, KFN.

Chestnut-sided Warbler - peak May 25 (600) PEPt, KFN.

Magnolia Warbler - peak May 25 (1300) PEPt KFN.

Black-throated Blue Warbler - peak May 25 (450) PEPt, KFN.

Connecticut Warbler - May 25 (1) Wolfe Island, May 24 (1), 31 (2, one netted) PEPt, KFN, EM, very rare irregular in spring as their main northward route is up the Mississippi valley.

Hooded Warbler - May 25 (1) PEPt, RKE.

Yellow-breasted Chat - May 24 (1) Amherst Island, KFN.

Summer Tanager - May 11 (1 male) Kingston, RKE.

Leconte's Sparrow - May 15 (1) PEPt, WC, PH *et al.*

Yellow-headed Blackbird - May 15 (adult male) PEPt, RKE, KFE, MCE; May 22-25(1 female) Amherst Island feeder, photo, AS, JS.

Orchard Oriole - May 11-25 (7 birds) 5 at PEPt and 2 Kingston, KFN.

Purple Finch - April/May (dozens) PEPt, KFN, moderate return flight.

House Finch - peak March 2 (300) PEPt, JHE, RDW, migrants.

Pine Siskin - March 19 to May 25 (34 in all), Kingston, KFN, light flight.

Contributors:

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M.T. Ellis	P. Hockey	

Kingston Field Naturalists (3+)

E. Machell	D. Martin	W. Martin
A. Scott	J. Scott	R.B. Stewart
R.D. Weir	D.V. Weseloh	

Loggerhead Shrike Status, 1997

Chris Grooms

The Loggerhead Shrike is one of Ontario's rarest breeding birds, and is in great danger of extirpation. For an overview of the Shrike's status in the Napanee Plain and in Ontario refer to *Blue Bill* (1995) 2: 2 and *Blue Bill* (1995) 2: 3-14.

As a result of the severely declining Ontario population the Canadian Wildlife Service in conjunction with the Toronto Metro Zoo and MacDonald College of McGill University, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue (Quebec) has established a captive breeding program.

There are 16 pairs of Loggerhead Shrikes in Ontario, 14 of which are in the Napanee Plain, with 3 single, unmated birds. Ten babies from 7 nests were taken to start the captive breeding program this year. Several nests were rejected due to low clutch numbers (a minimum of 4 young are to be left in the nest). Six unhatched eggs were collected. These did not hatch probably due to the cold spring we had, with several of the Shrikes renesting. Four nests were predated upon, and all were restarted.