

# Articles

## Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1996

by  
Robert Z. Dobos

### Introduction

This is the 15th annual report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC). The members of the Committee in 1996 were Margaret Bain, David Brewer, Peter Burke, Robert Dobos (non-voting Secretary and acting Chairman), Nick Escott, Kevin McLaughlin, Donald Sutherland and Alan Wormington. Ross James served as Museum Liaison (non-voting) to the OBRC.

Of the 135 records reviewed during 1996, 86 percent were accepted. Two new species were accepted and added to the Ontario bird checklist: Bicknell's Thrush (south) and Bullock's Oriole (south and north). The official Ontario list now stands at 467 species. Also added to the list for southern Ontario is Spotted Towhee. One new breeding species, Eared Grebe, was added for Ontario.

OBRC records are archived at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Researchers and other interested persons may examine filed reports and Committee decisions at the ROM by appointment. Please contact Brad Millen, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6, or call 416-586-5519.

### Listing of Records

The format of this report follows that

used in previous annual reports, except as noted below. Accepted records are listed by their English and scientific names following the AOU Check-list (1983) and its supplements to date. Following the names, a binomial numbering system appears. The first number indicates the total number of accepted records (by the OBRC) prior to 1 January 1982 (the formation of the OBRC); the second is the total number of accepted records from 1982 to 1996 (including those listed in this report). An asterisk in place of the first number indicates that documentation was not required for the occurrence of these species prior to 1982. Date(s) of occurrence, number of birds, sex, plumage, and location(s) are provided when known. Counties, Districts and Regional Municipalities are shown in *italics*. All contributors of documentation are listed. Contributors who were known to be the finders of the bird are underlined. Finders who did not submit a report are also listed, when known.

A change to the listing of records which has been used in this report is with the plumage terminology. The terminology used here follows the Humphrey and Parkes (1959) system. For an excellent summary of this system, as well as a comparison to the previously used terminology based on that used in the National Geographic Guide (Scott 1987), see Pittaway (1995a).





Figure 1: Ontario Bird Records Committee members for 1996. Left to right: Rob Dobos, Alan Wormington, David Brewer, Margaret Bain, Kevin McLaughlin, Peter Burke, Nick Escott, Don Sutherland. Photo by Ross D. James.

Every effort has been made to verify information published regarding a record; however, it is possible that some inaccuracies may still exist. We would welcome any corrections or updates to any such records. Where dates or other details listed here differ from those quoted in other published sources (for example, *Birders Journal* or *Audubon Field Notes*) we have used the most accurate available information.

All records that were not accepted because of uncertain identification or origin are listed separately. Submitters of all "not accepted" reports receive a letter from the Chairperson explaining the reasons for the decision, along with copies of the comments of the voting members. These reports are also kept on permanent file at the ROM. A "not accepted" record can be reconsidered

by the OBRC if new evidence is submitted to the Committee for review.

### Acknowledgements

The OBRC would like to thank the many observers who submitted reports, photographs and sketches of rare birds during 1996. We are grateful to Matt Heindel of California and Jon Dunn of Ohio for providing their expert opinions on the reports of a "Cassin's" Solitary Vireo and "Appalachian" Black-throated Blue Warbler, respectively. We also thank Michel Gosselin of the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) in Aylmer, Quebec, and Henri Ouellet, formerly of the CMN, for information and comments on specimens of Bicknell's Thrush. The following people are also thanked either for obtaining and forwarding reports from

others, or assisting the Committee in other ways: Margaret Bain, Barbara Charlton, Allen Chartier, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Nick Escott, Jean Griffin, Phill Holder, Jean Iron, Barry Jones, David Kraus, Sheldon McGregor, John Miles, Terry Osborne, Martin Parker, Ron Pittaway, Paul Pratt, Paul Prior, Ron Ridout, Kayo

Roy, Doug Sadler, Roy Smith, Marvin Smout, Mike Street, Ron Tozer, Allen Woodliffe, Alan Wormington and Bryan Wyatt.

I would also like to thank the other 1996 OBRC members for their assistance and cooperation throughout the past year, and for their helpful comments on previous drafts of this report.

## Accepted Records

### Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica* South Only (3/14)

1995 - one juvenal, 17-18 October, Laurel Creek Conservation Area, Waterloo (Craig A. Campbell, James J. Hummel, Robert Z. Dobos).

### Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* North Only (0/4)

1996 - one alternate, 15 May, Thunder Cape, Thunder Bay (Jul K. Wojnowski, also found by David Okines, Nancy Parish, Kathy Palko, Jennifer Sipkens).  
- two definitive alternate and two juvenal, 11 May - 2 September, Emo, Rainy River (David H. Elder, Alan Wormington, also found by Roger Simms, Karyn Mikolieu, Chuck Miller) - photo on file.

The Emo (Sewage Lagoons) record constitutes the first breeding record for Ontario. The nest was located and the two young were known to have fledged successfully.

### Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis* (0/9)

1996 - one alternate, 28 April - 14 May, Grand Bend, Lambton/Huron (David J. Milsom, found by T. van Oosterns) - photo on file.

### Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* (2/16)

1995 - one juvenal, 1-27 November, Van Wagners Beach, Hamilton-Wentworth (1, 5, 12 and 27 November), Burlington, Halton (3 and 9 November), and Winona, Hamilton-Wentworth (5 and 10-11 November) (Michael H. King, Robert Z. Dobos, William J. Crins, William F. Smith, Kevin Hannah, also found by David D. Beadle, Alfred L. Adamo, Robert Yukich, John L. Olmsted) - photo on file.  
- one juvenal, 2 November, Presqu'île Provincial Park, Northumberland (Donald Shanahan).  
- one juvenal, 17 November, Fort Erie, Niagara (Cathy Mueller, Betsy Potter, Michael H. King).

It was felt that all three records most likely pertained to different birds due to the increase in sightings in recent years.

### Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* (0/2)

1995 - one male, 28 October, Stoney Point, Essex (Thomas E. Broadwell).

This, the second record of this species for Ontario, was believed to be the same bird observed and photographed on the Michigan side of Lake St. Clair on 26-28 October (Mencotti 1996). It was likely the result of Hurricane Opal, which passed from the Gulf of Mexico to just south of the Great Lakes area on 5-6 October. Other inland frigatebird sightings during October 1995 occurred in Kansas and



Illinois (Mencotti 1996). The first Magnificent Frigatebird record for Ontario occurred at Point Edward, *Lambton* on 28 September 1988, following Hurricane Gilbert (Wormington and Curry 1990).

#### **Frigatebird species *Fregata* sp. (0/1)**

- 1995 – one male, 15 and 30 October (not seen between these dates), Mississippi Lake, *Lanark* (15 October), and Snow Road Station, *Frontenac* (30 October) (H. Keith Hawes, Don St. Pierre, also found by Kingsley Hawes, Dennis Graham).

This occurrence was likely another result of Hurricane Opal. The descriptions provided were inconclusive as to which species of frigatebird was involved. Since other species of frigatebird have occurred in North America (Great Frigatebird (*F. minor*) in Oklahoma and California (Howell 1994) and Lesser Frigatebird (*F. ariel*) in Maine (AOU 1983)), the OBRC cannot assume that a frigatebird sighting pertains to a Magnificent Frigatebird unless adequately described as such.

#### **Great Egret *Ardea alba* North Only (2/7)**

- 1996 – one, 22-30 April, New Liskeard, *Timiskaming* (Bruce Murphy) - photo on file.

#### **Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* (1/24)**

- 1996 – one alternate, 5-6 May, Wardsville, *Elgin* (Harold L. Lancaster, found by Nina Hurdle, Edgar Hurdle).  
 – one definitive alternate, 19 May, St. Clair National Wildlife Area, *Kent* (H. Michael Street).  
 – one definitive alternate, 18 June, Cambridge, *Waterloo* (Edward Cheskey).  
 1995 – one definitive alternate, 14 May, Guelph, *Wellington* (Mary Moreton, Russ Moreton).

#### **Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* (7/25)**

- 1995 – one alternate, 3-5 May, Presqu'île Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (Donald Shanahan, found by Doug Guay).

#### **Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* (2/18)**

- 1996 – one definitive alternate, 27 April - 5 May, Oshawa Second Marsh, *Durham* (Margaret J.C. Bain, found by Steven M. LaForest).

#### **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* (5/23)**

- 1996 – one definitive alternate, 21 May, Holiday Harbour, *Kent* (Alan Wormington, James N. Flynn) - photo on file.  
 1995 – one juvenal, 2 August, Hamilton Harbour, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Robert Z. Dobos, Craig S.A. McLaughlin).

The 2 August 1995 record is the earliest autumn date for this species in Ontario.

#### **Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (2/23)**

- 1996 – two definitive alternate, 4 May, Kinmount, *Victoria* (Douglas P. Tate).  
 – one definitive alternate, 9 June, Hamilton Harbour (Windermere Basin), *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Robert Curry).  
 – one basic, 26 October, Aylmer, *Elgin* (David A. Martin, found by Jim Sandusky, Sue Sandusky).

#### **Ibis species *Plegadis* sp. (3/22)**

- 1996 – one, 17 October, Queenston, *Niagara* (David J. Milsom).  
 – one, 10 November, Port Rowan, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Paul N. Prior).

#### **Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* South Only (2/44)**

- 1996 – one definitive basic *frontalis*, 27 March, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).  
 – five, 21 April, Loretto, *Simcoe* (John B. Schmelefske).  
 1995 – two definitive basic, 30 September, Wildwood Lake, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).  
 1994/95 – one definitive basic, 8 December - 1 March, Pittock Lake, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).  
 1994 – one definitive basic, 13-14 November, Wildwood Lake, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).

The Pittock Lake bird may be the first over-wintering record for Ontario.

#### **Ross's Goose *Chen rossii* South Only (0/12)**

- 1996 – two definitive basic white morph, 25-26 February, Vittoria, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (John B. Miles, also found by C. Ann Miles).  
 – one definitive basic blue morph, 18 March, Long Point (Big Creek Marsh), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David A. Sutton).  
 – one definitive basic white morph, 18-19 March, Etobicoke, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Barbara Reid, Zak Smith, Naish McHugh, Norman C. Murr) - photos on file.

The two birds on 25-26 February (see Miles 1996) provide the earliest spring occurrence of this species in Ontario. The 18 March bird at Big Creek Marsh is the first record of the blue morph for Ontario.

#### **Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* (1/19)**

- 1996 – one female or first basic male, 11-22 January, Burlington, *Halton* (Robert Z. Dobos, found by John B. Miles).  
 – one alternate male, 16 April, Barrie (Kempfenfelt Bay), *Simcoe* (Jim Forrest, found by Alex Mills) - photos on file.  
 – one alternate male, 16-17 April, Harrow, *Essex* (Dick Grolman, Jantina Grolman, Lorraine H. Foott).  
 – one alternate male, 4 May, Hamilton Harbour, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Kevin A. McLaughlin, also found by Robert Dawson).  
 1995 – one definitive alternate female, 22 December, Hamilton Harbour, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Kevin A. McLaughlin).

#### **Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* (1/8)**

- 1996 – one, 28 April, Kirkwall, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Paul D. Smith, Anteo Talevi, found by Steven Clark).

The circumstances of this record are noteworthy. This bird was sighted by two independent parties about seven kilometres away from each other and one hour apart. Talevi observed the bird as it briefly joined the outdoors "birds of prey show" at the African Lion Safari! It was not one of their captive birds, and is certainly considered to be a wild vagrant.

#### **Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni* (8/24)**

- 1996 – one definitive basic light morph, 18 April, Grimsby (Beamer Memorial Conservation Area), *Niagara* (Michael H. King, H. Michael Street).  
 – one definitive basic light morph, 11-12 May, Point Pelee National Park and Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, Ellen A. Smout, also found by William G. Lamond, Kevin A. McLaughlin, George M. Naylor, Sheldon McGregor).

#### **"Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis harlani* (\*1)**

- 1996 – one juvenal dark morph, 8 January - 17 March, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Michael H. King) - photo on file.

Amongst other features, the diagnostic barring on the underside of the outer



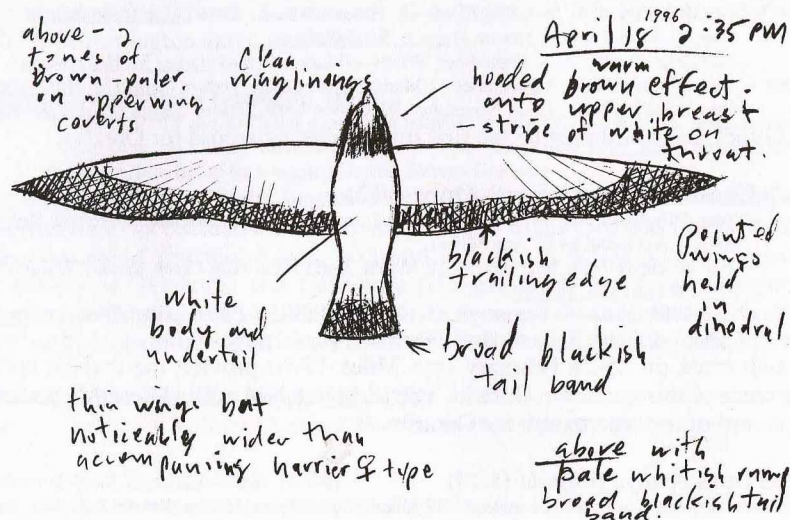


Figure 2: Definitive basic light morph Swainson's Hawk at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area, Grimsby, *Niagara* on 18 April 1996. Drawing by Michael H. King.

primary tips was noted on this bird, which separates juvenal Harlan's from other dark morph Red-tailed Hawks in this plumage (Wheeler and Clark 1995). This is the first accepted record of this western form by the OBRC; however, there are a number of older sightings which are considered to be valid (Pittaway 1993).

#### **Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus* (0/2)**

1996 – one juvenal, 24 August, Long Point (Tip), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Colin Barton, Christopher J. Dunn, Paul N. Prior, also found by Cyril Crocker, Cathy B. Doran).

This is the second accepted record for Ontario. The location, date and age of the bird point to a wild origin.

#### **Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* South Only (1/32)**

1996 – one first alternate, 2 June, Beaverton, *Durham* (Margaret J.C. Bain).

This bird was leg-banded with a dark blue narrow band over a silver metal band on the right leg, and had probably been banded as a chick in Michigan the previous year.

#### **American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* (1/3)**

1996 – two, 9 September, Port Colborne (Gravelly Bay and Sugarloaf Point), *Niagara* (William C. D'Anna, Alan Wormington, found by Mary Hart, Doug Hart) - photos on file.

This is the fourth accepted record for Ontario. These birds were undoubtedly a result of Hurricane Fran which passed through the area on 7-8 September (Curry 1996). Although only one bird was observed by those submitting documentation,

the original discoverers reported seeing two birds together; thus the record has been accepted as such.

#### **Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* (2/6)**

1996 – one, 28 May, Long Point (Squires Ridge), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Warren Claydon).

The range of dates of occurrence for the eight records of this species for Ontario are: 19 May - 23 June (6 records) and 1 September - 14 October (2 records) (Bain 1992, Pittaway 1995b, James 1991).

#### **American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana* (7/44)**

1996 – seven alternate (four females and three males), 15 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, found by Reinhold Pokraka).

– two, 8-18 September, Blenheim, *Kent* (Blake A. Mann, Keith J. Burk) - photo on file.

1995 – one alternate, 2 May, Ajax, *Durham* (Brian Henshaw).

#### **Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* North Only (2/8)**

1996 – one, 7 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (David Okines, also found by Nancy Parish, Jul K. Wojnowski, Uli Faigle).

#### **Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (0/2)**

1995 – one basic, 8-21 December, Kingston, *Frontenac* (Ron D. Weir, R. Douglas McRae, Glenn Coady, John L. Olmsted, Robert Curry, Kayo J. Roy, found by Tony Miller) - photos on file.

An account of this occurrence was published by Weir (1996). Providing the



Figure 3: One of two American Oystercatchers at Sugarloaf Point, *Niagara* on 9 September 1996 following Hurricane Fran. Photo by Alan Wormington.



second record for Ontario, it closely follows the first at Port Perry, *Durham* on 10 September 1995 (Dobos 1996). Some have suggested that both records pertain to the same individual; however, since there is no evidence to clearly support this argument, the Committee considers the occurrences to be separate.

#### **Mew Gull *Larus canus* (3/11)**

- 1996 – one juvenal/first basic *brachyrhynchus*, 12 October, Wildwood Lake, *Oxford* (William G. Lindley, James M. Holdsworth).  
 – one second basic, 17 November, Queenston, *Niagara* (Richard Knapton, Robert Curry).

#### **California Gull *Larus californicus* (0/15)**

- 1995 – one definitive basic, 12 November - 1 December, Queenston and Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (William C. D'Anna).

#### **Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* (0/6)**

- 1995/96 – one definitive basic, 12 November - 1 January, Fort Erie (12-13 November and 1 January), Queenston (19-20 November), Niagara Falls (Whirlpool) (24-25 November) and Port Weller (27-28 November), *Niagara* (John B. Schmelefske, Betsy Potter, William C. D'Anna, Mary Ellen Hebb, Kayo J. Roy, Marcy Foster, found by Glenn Coady) - photos on file.

The above listed occurrences are considered to pertain to one individual bird, the province's sixth record. Remarkably, this is the third separate occurrence for this species at Port Weller within one year (Dobos 1996).



Figure 4: Definitive basic Ross's Gull at Port Weller, *Niagara* from 27-28 November 1995 (also present along Niagara River between 12 November 1995 and 1 January 1996). Photo by *Mary Ellen Hebb*.

#### **Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* South Only (\*2)**

- 1996 – one juvenal, 26 September, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).  
 Curry (1996) has suggested that this and another reported Arctic Tern at this time were likely displaced by Hurricane Fran. The autumn occurrence of Arctic Tern on the Great Lakes is certainly not without precedent, and in addition to being carried from the Atlantic Ocean overland by Fran (as other seabirds definitely were), another possibility is that the storm may have simply stalled southbound migrants of this species already heading overland from James Bay into the Great Lakes area. Either scenario seems possible.

#### **Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* (1/3)**

- 1996 – one juvenal, 8 September, Chub Point, *Northumberland* (Jarmo Jalava).  
 – one definitive alternate, 8 September, Waverly Beach, *Niagara* (Robert Curry, John L. Olmsted, John Lamey, Robert Z. Dobos, also found by T. Ronald Scovell).  
 – one definitive alternate (found dead, badly decomposed), 28 September, Long Beach, *Niagara* (Robert Curry, John L. Olmsted) - specimen (skeleton) in ROM.

These birds were obviously displaced from the Atlantic Ocean by Hurricane Fran (see Jalava 1996, Curry and Olmsted 1996, Lamey 1996). Curry (1996) gives a summary of reported sightings from Lakes Ontario and Erie following the storm, including a few sightings which have yet to be submitted to the OBRC. Given the number of displaced birds involved with this hurricane, there is no reason to believe that the 28 September specimen was the same individual as the one observed on 8 September. Thus, there are now four accepted records of Sooty Tern for Ontario. The only previous record for Ontario was of a bird on 14 August 1955 near Brockville, *Leeds and Grenville*, following Hurricane Connie (James 1984).

#### **Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* South Only (0/1)**

- 1995 – one, 5-6 December, Ottawa (Deschenes Rapids), *Ottawa-Carleton* (Michael Tate, found by Bruce Di Labio).

This is the first record for Ontario since 1953 (James 1991). Large late autumn/early winter flights of this species to the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence area have occurred in the past, often separated by several decades (Gaston 1988). The OBRC has not yet reviewed documentation for these historical occurrences of this species.

#### **Chuck-will's-widow *Caprimulgus carolinensis* (\*16)**

- 1996 – one male, 13-14 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (John G. Keenleyside, Robert Z. Dobos, also found by Kim Eckert).

#### **Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* (1/7)**

- 1995 – one first basic, 10 September, Amherstburg, *Essex* (Robert C. Pettit) - photos on file.

#### **Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens* (1/3)**

- 1996 – one, 18-20 May, Long Point Provincial Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David J. Agro, Alan Wormington, also found by Robert S. Ridgely, Ken Berlin, Don Carr) - photos on file.

This, the fourth record for Ontario, is the first to occur in spring, and the first since 1982.



**Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* (8/60)**

- 1996 – one, 29 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Jul K. Wojnowski, also found by David Okines).  
 – one, 1 June, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Jul K. Wojnowski, also found by David Okines, Kathy Palko, Jennifer Sipkens).  
 – one, 31 August, Toronto (Leslie Street Spit), *Metropolitan Toronto* (Norman C. Murr, Roy B.H. Smith) - photos on file.  
 – one, 2 November, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott, also found by Stanley V. Phippen, Brian Moore).

The 2 November bird at Thunder Bay is the latest date for northern Ontario.

**Gray Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* (1/4)**

- 1996 – one first basic, 5 October, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* (Paul D. Pratt, Alan Wormington, also found by Paul Desjardins) - photos on file.

Four of the five records of this rare vagrant to Ontario, including the above record, have been during the month of October, the exception being the bird on 26 July 1986 at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Wormington 1987).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* (3/34)**

- 1996 – one, 23 May, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, *Northumberland* (William H. Stone).  
 1990 – one, 26 May or 2 June, Bloomingdale, *Waterloo* (Roberta Fisher).

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana* (0/3)**

- 1996 – one, 3-13 September, Arner, *Essex* (Michael F. Malone, Stephen T. Pike, Alan Wormington, Allen T. Chartier) - photos on file.  
 – one, 25-28 September, Linton, *York* (Craig S.A. McLauchlan, David J. Milsom, Georgia Carley, Robert Carley, found by Jackie Jenkins) - photos on file.

It is remarkable enough that two records of this extreme rarity would occur in Ontario in the same year, but a third bird was also reported at Hay Bay, *Lennox and Addington* on 29 October 1996 (Ridout 1997), which has not yet been reviewed by the OBRC. The most recent previous record was on 29-30 September 1993 at Cayuga, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Bain 1994). The first occurrence of this species for Ontario, at Dorion, *Thunder Bay* on 28-30 October 1977 (James 1991), has not yet been reviewed by the OBRC.

**Black-billed Magpie *Pica pica* South Only (2/3)**

- 1996 – one, 6 May, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Eric A. Machell, also found by Myrna Wood, David Shirley).

This is the first accepted record of this species for southern Ontario since 1984 (Wormington 1986). The Committee considered that the date and location favoured a wild origin.

**Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii* (0/12)**

- 1996 – one, 22 May, Long Point (Squires Ridge), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robin Gutsell, Warren Claydon) - photo on file.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliptila caerulea* North Only (2/9)**

- 1996 – one first basic, 13 September, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Jul K. Wojnowski, also found by Kerstin Kober, Cam Stevens, Mark Nelitz, Ann Sullivan) - photo on file.  
 – one, 3 October, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Tony Murray, also found by Robin M. Dawes).



Figure 5: Ash-throated Flycatcher at Long Point Provincial Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* from 18-20 May 1996. Photo by Alan Wormington.



Figure 6: Gray Kingbird at Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* on 5 October 1996. Photo by Alan Wormington.



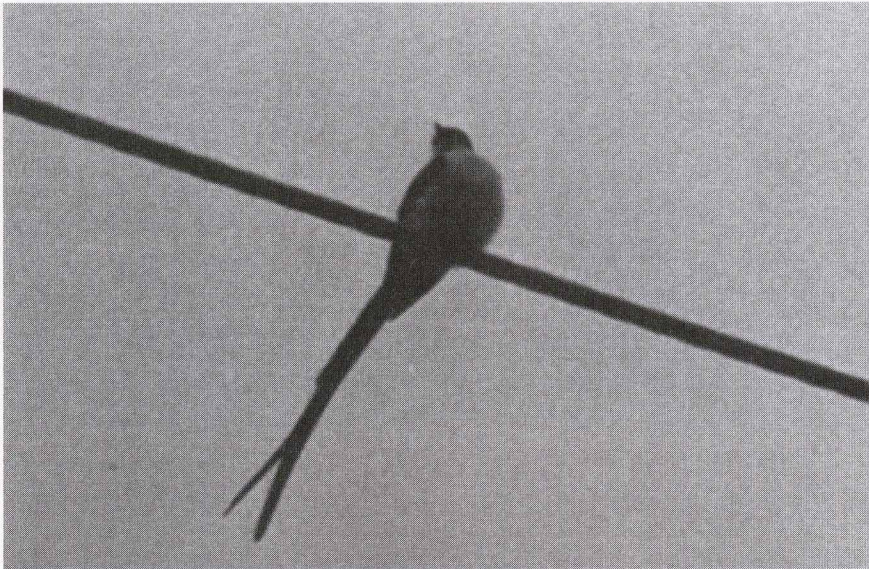


Figure 7: Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Linton, York from 25-28 September 1996. Photo by Craig S.A. McLaughlan.



Figure 8: Bewick's Wren banded at Long Point's Breakwater Station (Squire's Ridge), Haldimand-Norfolk on 22 May 1996. Photo by Warren Claydon.

#### Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (7/14)

- 1995 – one first basic, 11-12 October, Britannia Bay, Ottawa-Carleton (Michael Tate, Tony F.M. Beck, found by F. Reid) - photos on file.

#### Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides* (2/18)

- 1996 – one male, 19 October, Algonquin Provincial Park (Jake Lake), Nipissing (Colin D. Jones).  
 1995/96 – one female, 18 December - 1 January, Wheatley Provincial Park, Kent (G. Thomas Hince, also found by Tammy Dobbie, Derrick Mercer, Mark Randall).  
 1995 – one first basic male, 26 October - 1 November, Minnitaki, Kenora (Carolle Eady, Robin M. Dawes) - photos on file.  
 – one first basic male (different from above bird), 1 November, Minnitaki, Kenora (Carolle Eady) - photo on file.  
 1994/95 – two females, 19 December - 9 March, Wheatley Provincial Park, Kent (Alan Wormington, James N. Flynn, found by Mark W. Jennings) - photos on file.  
 1994 – one female, 26 November - 22 December, Curve Lake, Peterborough (Michael Richardson, Peter S. Burke, found by David Johnson) - photo on file.  
 1993 – one male, October (exact date not known), Minnitaki, Kenora (Carolle Eady).

The two birds at Minnitaki in 1995 occurred together on 1 November only. The female at Wheatley Provincial Park in 1995/96 is likely to be one of those present there in 1994/95, but these records are listed separately here for ease of reporting.

#### Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* (4/24)

- 1995 – one, 13-14 October, Long Point Provincial Park (Old Cut), Haldimand-Norfolk (Dennis A. Gralak, Ron C. Ridout, also found by Edward Berst, Susan Gralak, Stan Sacha, Gloria Sacha).

#### Bicknell's Thrush *Catharus bicknelli* (4/0)

- 1981 – one first basic male, 26 September, Bath, Lennox and Addington (Ron D. Weir) - specimen (skin) in CMN (#88666).  
 1980 – one, 17 May, Prince Edward Point, Prince Edward (R. Douglas McRae) - photos on file.  
 1979 – one first basic female, 19 September, Bath, Lennox and Addington (Ron D. Weir) - specimen (skin) in CMN (#69348).  
 – one first basic female, 23 September, Prince Edward Point, Prince Edward (Fred Cooke, R. Douglas McRae) - specimen (skin) in CMN (#69604).

These provide the first four records for Ontario. The AOU recently split this species from the Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) (AOU 1995). Subsequently, the OBRC obtained details of several existing records for review, including three specimens housed at the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN), and another documented by quality photographs, all of which are listed above. These records have been verified by Dr. Henri Ouellet, former Curator of Ornithology at CMN, whose research led to the recognition of Bicknell's as a full species (see Ouellet 1993). Bicknell's Thrush is considered by some to be identifiable in the field given excellent viewing conditions and familiarity with other thrushes. However, the OBRC cautions that complete details of relevant features, preferably augmented with good photographs, would likely be expected as adequate documentation for its occurrence. See Pittaway (1996) for a summary of identification features.

#### Varied Thrush *Ixoreus naevius* North Only After 1993 (5/49)

- 1995/96 – one male, 4 November - 11 January, Marathon, Thunder Bay (Lois Devereaux, found by Paul Inwood) - photo on file.





Figure 9: First basic Blue-gray Gnatcatcher banded at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* on 13 September 1996. Photo by *Jul K. Wojnowski*.



Figure 10: One of two female Mountain Bluebirds at Wheatley Provincial Park, *Kent* from 19 December 1994 to 9 March 1995. Photo by *James N. Flynn*.

**“Lawrence’s” Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera* x *V. pinus* (\*/7)**

1996 – one male, 11 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Kent* (Blake A. Mann, also found by Tom Chatterton).

**Black-throated Gray Warbler *Dendroica nigrescens* (4/5)**

1996 – one first basic male, 14 September, Toronto Islands (Muggs Island), *Metropolitan Toronto* (Edward Kelly, Ron Kellner).

This bird was mist-netted and banded by the Toronto Bird Observatory.

**Kirtland’s Warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii* (7/9)**

1996 – one definitive alternate male, 10 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (James B. Lesser, Alan Wormington, James N. Flynn, also found by Jeffrey Goldsmith, Sheldon Kirsch) - photos on file.

**Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens* North Only (2/3)**

1996 – one, 1-26 November, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Paul Strobl, Nicholas G. Escott, also found by Heidi Strobl) - photos on file.

On 26 November, the bird was captured due to its weakened condition, then flown to Guelph’s Wild Bird Clinic where it was rehabilitated.

**Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* (2/12)**

1996 – one first alternate male, 20 May, Oxdrift, *Kenora* (Robin M. Dawes, Carolle Eady, found by Alice Wall) - photos on file.

It is interesting to note that the original finder reported a total of four birds at her feeder that looked like the Western Tanager, but only one was present (and photographed) when more experienced observers arrived later.

**Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus* (1/1)**

1995 – one female, 10 May, Dorland, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).

This is only the second accepted record by the OBRC, the first being a male at Rosslyn Village, *Thunder Bay* on 6-7 May 1978 (Wormington 1986). A number of older occurrences (see James 1991) have yet to be reviewed by the OBRC.

**Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerulea* (7/27)**

1996 – one male, 20 May, Warsaw, *Peterborough* (Neil Boughen, also found by Leigh Boughen).

**Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena* (0/3)**

1996 – one male, 18-20 May, Copetown, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Robin A. Child, Bert Millar, also found by Raleigh Child).

This is the fourth record for Ontario, all of which have occurred during spring. However, evidence for one of these, at Pickle Lake, *Kenora* on 10 May 1979 (James 1991) has not yet been reviewed by the OBRC. It is interesting to note that this recent occurrence was part of a veritable explosion of this species east of its normal range during the spring of 1996, which included birds in North Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and eastern Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, as summarized in the various respective regional summaries in *Audubon Field Notes*.



**Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (2/6)**

- 1996 – one definitive alternate male, 13 May, St. Catharines, *Niagara* (E. Ainsley Barley, also found by Dorothy Barley) - photo on file.  
 – one female, 20-23 May, Holiday Harbour, *Kent* (James N. Flynn, Alan Wormington, found by June M. Gordon) - photos on file.

With eight records now accepted for the province, a pattern of spring occurrence is emerging. The range of dates for seven of these records is 29 April to 4 June.

**Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* (0/6)**

- 1995/96 – one first basic male, 3 December - 9 April, Hamilton, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Ursula Kolster, Don Woodside) - photo on file.  
 – one male, 17 December - 3 March, Palermo, *Halton* (Robert Z. Dobos, Michael H. King, David J. Milsom, found by Alfred Kuhnigk) - photos on file.  
 1995 – one male, 18 October, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Matt T. Heindel).  
 1989 – one female, 17 December, Erieau, *Kent* (Alan Wormington, also found by Mark W. Jennings).

The AOU (1995) recently split the former Rufous-sided Towhee into this species and Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). Two records of Spotted Towhee for northern Ontario had been previously published by the OBRC (Dobos 1996). The above records now add this species to the list for southern Ontario. Details of the Hamilton bird were previously published (Kolster 1996). An analysis of sound recordings of the call notes of the Palermo bird in 1995-96 suggested that it was one of the northerly interior races of this species, either *P.m. curtatus* or *P.m. arcticus* (Garrett 1996).

**Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla* North Only (0/11)**

- 1995 – one, 29-30 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (David Okines, also found by Marek Klich).

**Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* (5/40)**

- 1996 – one male, 28 April - 1 May, St. Williams, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. Wallace, Beth Wallace).  
 – one, 17 May, Bracebridge, *Muskoka* (Allan Sinclair) - photo on file.  
 1994 – one, 20 June, Kirkfield, *Victoria* (Barbara Kalthoff, also found by Joan Winearls) - photos on file.  
 1961 – one, 19 June, Moose River mouth (Sandy Island), *Cochrane* (Douglas C. Sadler) - photo on file.

**Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* (3/19)**

- 1995 – one male, 24 May, Ile Parisienne, *Algoma* (David J.T. Hussell, C. Anthony Walker, also found by William C. Scharfe).

**Harris's Sparrow *Zonotrichia querula* South Only (3/28)**

- 1996 – one male, 29 April - 7 May, St. Williams, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (John L. Olmsted, also found by James A.N. Dowall).  
 – one first basic, 21 October, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Scott E. Shaum).  
 1995/96 – one first basic/first alternate, 2 December - 7 May, Ottawa, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Robert Gorman) - photo on file.  
 1994/95 – one first basic, circa mid December - 5 March, Cache Bay, *Nipissing* (J. Logue) - photo on file.  
 1994 – one definitive alternate, 6-7 May, Oshawa, *Durham* (Bruno Kern) - photo on file.

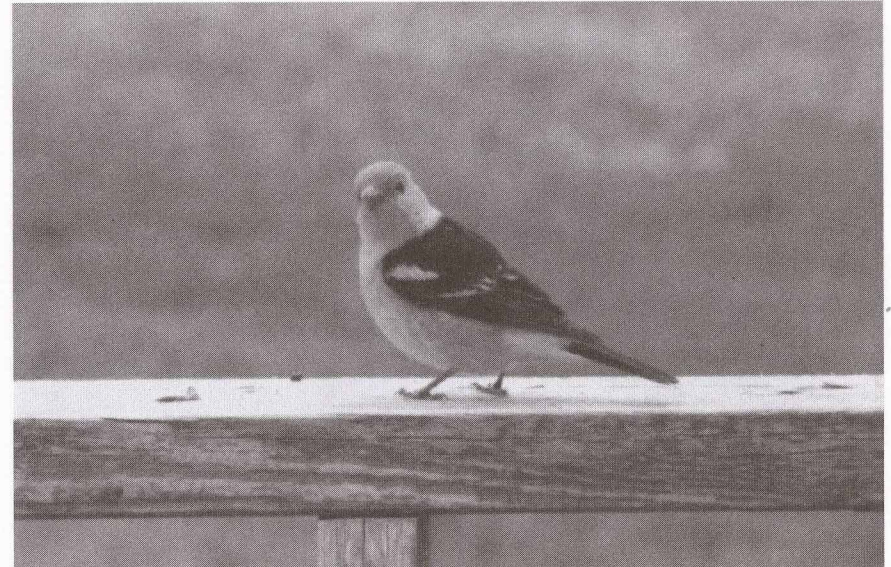


Figure 11: First alternate male Western Tanager at Oxdrift, *Kenora* on 20 May 1996. Photo by Carolle Eady.



Figure 12: First basic male Spotted Towhee at Hamilton, *Hamilton-Wentworth* from 3 December 1995 to 9 April 1996. Photo by Don Woodside.





Figure 13: Lark Sparrow at Kirkfield, Victoria on 20 June 1994. Photo by Barbara Kalthoff.

### Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii* (3/1)

- 1989 – one female, 2 June, Schreiber, Thunder Bay (Alan Wormington, also found by William G. Lamond).
- 1981 – one female or first basic male, 31 October, Peterborough, Peterborough (Peter Hogenbirk).
- 1980/81 – one female or first basic male, circa mid-December - 12 March, Port Dover, Haldimand-Norfolk (Marvin S. Smout, Alan Wormington, found by Ted Shiltz) - photos on file.
- 1977 – one female or first basic male, 13-19 November, Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay (Walter S. Zarowski, found by Keith Denis) - photos on file.

The AOU has recently split the former Northern Oriole into this species and the Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) (AOU 1995). These are the first four accepted records for this species by the OBRC, officially adding it to the Ontario checklist.

## Not Accepted Records

### Identification Uncertain

In most reports listed below, the documentation provided was found to be insufficient to establish the identity of the species claimed. In very few cases did the Committee consider that the identification was actually an error. Any of these reports may be resubmitted for further review if new supporting evidence is provided.

- 1996 – Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, one, 22 May, Long Point (Big Creek Marsh), Haldimand-Norfolk.
- Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), one, 6 May, Stoney Point, Essex.

- Mongolian Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*), one, 1 September, Port Perry (Nonquon Sewage Lagoons), Durham.
- Mew Gull, one, 10 November, Niagara Falls, Niagara.
- Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*), one, 28 June, Foxey, Manitoulin.
- Bicknell's Thrush, one, 17 May, Point Pelee National Park, Essex.
- Black-headed Grosbeak, one, 16 May, Toronto, Metropolitan Toronto.
- Black-headed Grosbeak, one, 17 May, Kitchener, Waterloo.
- Blue Grosbeak, one, 14-15 May, Binbrook, Hamilton-Wentworth.
- 1995 – Greater White-fronted Goose, 65, 5 November, Toronto, Metropolitan Toronto.
- Greater White-fronted Goose, four, 8 November, Port Stanley, Elgin.
- Swainson's Hawk, one, 11 September, Whitby (Lynde Shores Conservation Area), Durham.
- Cave Swallow (*Hirundo fulva*), one, 12 September, Collingwood, Simcoe.
- "White-winged" Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis aikenii*), one, 17 October, Wingham, Huron - specimen (tail feathers) on file.
- 1993 – Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, one, late May 1993, Buckhorn, Peterborough.
- 1989 – "Cassin's" Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius cassinii*), one, 19 May, Beachville, Oxford.
- "Appalachian" Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens cairnsi*), one, 10 May, Tillsonburg, Oxford.

## Updates/Corrections to Previous OBRC Reports

### 1995 Report (Ontario Birds 14: 50-71)

- under Tufted Duck, change bracketed numbering to "(1/14)".
- under Piping Plover, add "Michael McEvoy" as a contributor, and add " - photo on file".
- under Ivory Gull, 23-26 December 1995, add "David J. Milsom" as a contributor.
- under Band-tailed Pigeon, change "all occurring during fall migration" to "the first during spring migration".
- under Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 7-10 July 1995, the list of contributors should be changed to read "(Stephane Bonneville, Peter S. Burke, Jamie Fenneman, Greg Kubica, Stuart Mackenzie, Matthew J. Mills, Gavin C. Platt, Kayo J. Roy, also found by Peter Carson)".
- under Black-throated Gray Warbler, change dates to "25 April - 3 May", and add "Craig S.A. McLauchlan" as a contributor.
- "Figure 16" on page 68 should be changed to "Figure 12".

### 1994 Report (Ontario Birds 13: 46-65)

- under Greater White-fronted Goose, 23 November - 8 December 1993, add "Alf H. Rider" as a contributor, and add " - photo on file".
- under Tufted Duck, change bracketed numbering to "(1/10)".

### 1993 Report (Ontario Birds 12: 41-58)

- under Tufted Duck, change bracketed numbering to "(1/5)".

### 1990 Report (Ontario Birds 9: 18-44)

- under Rufous-sided Towhee, 10-17 November 1990, add "Walter S. Zarowski" as a contributor, and add " - photo on file".

### 1988 Report (Ontario Birds 7: 43-54)

- under Unaccepted Records (origin questionable), Ringed Teal, add "Anthony L. Lang" as a contributor.



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Robert Z. Dobos, 1156 5th Concession Road West,  
R.R. 2, Waterdown, Ontario L0R 2H2