

date when few passerines have begun nesting in Ontario. Female cowbirds may have had few or no other nests to parasitize at this time and were thus forced to lay in this single nest.

House Finches in Guelph may be parasitized more frequently than in other areas of North America because they select different sites for nesting. House Finches in Guelph predominantly nest in evergreen trees (Graham, in press), while House Finches in other areas nest in a wide variety of sites (Bent 1968). Evergreen trees may be more intensively searched for nests by female cowbirds than other sites. The Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) also nests predominantly in evergreen trees (Reynolds and Knapton 1984) and is frequently parasitized by the cowbird (Peck 1974).

Literature Cited

- Bent, A. C. 1968. Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows and Allies. United States National Museum Bulletin 237.
- Friedmann, H., L. F. Kiff, and S. I. Rothstein. 1977. A further contribution to knowledge of host relations of the parasitic cowbirds. Smithsonian Contribution to Zoology 235.
- Graham, D. S. In press. House Finch nest-site selection at Guelph, Ontario. Condor.
- Peck, G. K. 1974. Ontario Nest Record Scheme Eleventh Report. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.
- Reynolds, J. D. and R. W. Knapton. 1984. Nest-site selection and breeding biology of the Chipping Sparrow. Wilson Bulletin 96: 488-493.

Donald S. Graham, 211-35 Charles St. W., Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1R6

Book Review

A Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of the Long Point Area. 1985. By Vic Fazio, Dave Shepherd & Terrie Woodrow. First Edition. Long Point Bird Observatory, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0. 12 pp. fold-out, \$1.00.

This list summarizes the seasonal status of 331 species of birds known to have occurred in the Long Point region. Based largely on Long Point Bird Observatory data, it provides a long overdue revision of a similar list published in report form by LPBO in 1969 and a more basic checklist produced by the Ontario

Ministry of Natural Resources in 1976. Not only is it updated, it also incorporates information from the surrounding region — a welcome addition considering the ornithological richness of such areas as Turkey Point, Backus Woods, Spooky Hollow, and St. Williams Forestry Station.

On the cover, a map of the study area shows most of the roads in detail. Apart from the forgivable omission of a scale and compass reference point, the map would have benefitted greatly if a few place names other than just Port Rowan and Turkey Point had been included. County and concession roads could also have been identified but, as is the case in so many checklists, space seems to be the overriding limiting factor. For the more serious birder, the off-shore boundaries of the region could perhaps have been defined as well.

For "ticking" purposes, three blank columns are provided alongside the list of species. Space is at a premium, however, making it a little difficult to neatly tick off species. Birders would probably also have liked to have been provided with sufficient space in which to note dates of visits.

I can find only two errors. The dates for Smew are incorrectly given as 26 February-6 March 1960. The record should read 9-10 December 1973. "LeConte's" should be two words, honouring John Le Conte.

The nomenclature and taxonomic order adhere to the most recent AOU revisions. So-called "hypothetical" species are not included in the main body of the list, as is the usual case. Instead, they are listed separately as "additional" species, pending acceptance by the Ontario Bird Records Committee. The authors apparently overlooked the fact that Band-tailed Pigeon has been accepted by the Committee. Passenger Pigeon, though known to be a former Long Point resident, is

perhaps understandably excluded from the list. On the other hand, Trumpeter Swan could just as easily have been omitted, especially since no annotation is provided. One could also argue for deletion of selected hybrids and phenotypes, or at least for a complete and consistent treatment of these forms.

Several codes are used to indicate frequency of nesting and to identify potential difficulties that might arise with identification and detectability. While these codes may be a little tedious to interpret, I see their value for the most part. My main criticism concerns the omission of definitions for nesting frequencies.

Seasonal occurrences and abundances are graphically depicted, providing a very efficient and effective treatment. As such, the checklist is a joy to use. However, I am disappointed with the vague definitions given for the various levels of abundance and frequencies of occurrence. For example, a rare species is defined as one which "...may be present annually but found infrequently; usually difficult to find". The other definitions are equally vague. Despite the overall goals of a checklist, I somehow expected something a little more specific, particularly considering LPBO's wealth of statistical information. Admittedly, a checklist is not an appropriate scientific forum in which to publish detailed information. Still, the checklist's bar graphs seem to infer a validity which, being based on highly subjective criteria, may actually be unfounded. Without proper definitions, all kinds of arguments

can be made with regard to interpretation of the seasonal abundances provided. Amongst other things, I wonder whether Great Blue Heron is truly abundant during migration, why several species of diving ducks are not considered abundant in the fall, whether Glaucous Gull is indeed common in winter and spring, whether Northern Bobwhite has in fact been recorded during every week of the year, and whether Bobolink is abundant in late summer. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the bar graphs can be used to draw comparisons between the abundances of individual species. For example, are Bobolinks more abundant in late summer than at other times of the year? Or can the graph also be interpreted to mean that Bobolinks, in late summer, are as abundant as Red-winged Blackbirds? Of course the former interpretation is correct, but the latter also seems to be inferred. Admittedly, this is a problem which is typical of bar-graph lists in general.

I also think that the authors have been overly generous in their designation of the "accidental" (i.e., "out of season") status. There are several instances in which the "occasional" or "rare" status would seem to have been a more appropriate description. For example, Merlin is presented as being "accidental" in the first week of April, but thereafter its status very oddly and abruptly switches to "uncommon" through the remainder of its spring migration. It is difficult to understand how the early April record could possibly be considered "out of season".

The "erratic" code may also have been too liberally applied, in my

opinion. I would feel more comfortable if it had been reserved only for irruptive species; otherwise it is redundant and confusing in relation to the "accidental" and "occasional" annotations displayed on the bar graphs. For example, based on six records, Little Blue Heron is considered "accidental" on the graph as well as being coded "erratic". Conversely, there are only five records for American White Pelican, but it is not considered "erratic", though it is considered "accidental". The authors might feel that Little Blue Herons tend to wander and hence, are more nomadic than American White Pelicans. However, their data do not clearly support this. There seem to be several more inconsistencies of this type. These can only be resolved if definitions and criteria are detailed.

Finally, the confines of the region, as displayed on the cover map, have not been correctly applied in the case of a few breeding species. For example, Red-bellied Woodpecker has never actually been confirmed as breeding in the study area, yet the authors consider it to be a regular breeding species. Also, Common Nighthawk is indicated as a regular breeder and common in summer; this is surely not an accurate assessment of its breeding status within the study area.

Apart from all this nit-picking, the checklist appears to be complete, well produced and is undoubtedly the result of a great deal of hard work. It is a vast improvement over previous lists for the Long Point area. While I feel that the provision of one additional page of text could very well have addressed and

set to rest most of the interpretational problems that are indicated above, all in all, the list unquestionably meets most of the needs of Ontario's birding community. As such, it is a definite "must" for anyone birding

in the Long Point area. Indeed, birders elsewhere in Ontario may find it valuable for comparative purposes. And the cost is certainly not prohibitive!

J.D. McCracken, P.O. Box 152, Vittoria, Ontario N0E 1W0

OFO Announcements

Field Trips

6 February 1988, Saturday: EAGLES AT PETROGLYPHS PROV. PARK. Leader: Geoff Carpentier (705) 743-8594. Meet at the Park gate at 9:30 AM. From Peterborough take Hwy. 28 north 50 km to Woodview. Turn right on Northey's Bay Rd. and go 11 km to the Park gate.

29 April-1 May 1988, Friday to Sunday: PELEE ISLAND. Leaders: Chip & Linda Weseloh (416) 485-1464. Meet at ferry dock at Kingsville at 5:30 PM Friday. Accommodation at Mill Point Lodge (approx. \$48 double occupancy, Bed & Breakfast). Saturday morning start may be possible. Return on 2:00 PM ferry, Sunday. Reservations essential by April 1st — call Chip for details.

7 May 1988, Saturday: BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS, TORONTO ISLAND. Leader: Glenn Coady (416) 596-8109. Meet 7:45 AM at Toronto Island ferry terminal.

10-11 September 1988, Saturday & Sunday: CORNWALL DAM GULL OUTING. Leader Bruce DiLabio (613) 729-6267. This trip will be combined with a visit to Hoople Creek for shorebirds. Details to follow.

24 September 1988, Saturday: OFO PELAGIC TRIP. Leader: Bob Curry (416) 648-6895. M. V. "Macassa Bay" leaves Hamilton Harbour at 8:00 AM. Meet at the dock at the foot of Bay Street North by 7:45 AM with a lunch and plenty of warm clothing. Return 4-4:30 PM. Only 100 tickets available at \$40 per person.

5-8 October 1988, Wednesday-Saturday: MARATHON. Leader: Alan Wormington (519) 326-0687. Fall migration North of Superior. List of birding spots between Thunder Bay and Marathon will be available for those wishing to spend an entire week in the area. Details to follow.