

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 1988

by
Glenn Coady and Alan Wormington

This is the seventh annual report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) of the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO). A total of 102 records was reviewed by the OBRC during 1988, of which 70 (about 69%) were found to be acceptable.

This report officially adds one new species to Ontario's Checklist of Birds — Great-tailed Grackle — bringing the provincial total to 437 species. Added to the list of species now recorded in northern Ontario is Golden-crowned Sparrow; added to the list for southern Ontario is Brambling. The report also officially adds a new species to the list of breeding birds in Ontario — Western Kingbird — bringing the provincial total in this category to 285 species.

The OBRC members for 1988 were Robert Curry (Chairman), Glenn Coady (Secretary), Ross D. James, Ian L. Jones, D. James Mountjoy, Ronald G. Tozer and Alan Wormington.

Species Accounts

In the following accounts information on age, sex and plumage for each record is included if it was available and the determination was certain. This information is presented on the system outlined in "Plumage, age and moult terminology" by Sharrock (1985). Place names in italics refer to a county, regional municipality or district in Ontario. All contributors who have provided a written description, photograph or specimen have been credited; contributor's names have also been underlined if they were a discoverer of the bird(s). All records pertain to sight records unless it is indicated that a photograph or specimen has been received.

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Accepted Records

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

1987 — one immature, 6 November, Woodstock, *Oxford* (James M. Holdsworth).

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

- 1988 — one, 14–17 May (not to only 15 May as in *American Birds* 42:427), Erieau, *Kent* (Thomas N. Hayman, P. Allen Woodliffe, Glenn Coady) — photos on file.
 — one, 5–9 June, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Roger Frost, Darin C. Bennett) — photo on file.
 — one, 15–16 June, Omemee, *Victoria* (John Sadler, Jean Sadler) — photos on file.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

1988 — one sub-adult, 29 February–12 March and 17 March–7 April, Pickering, *Durham*, and 13–14 March, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Margaret J. Bain, Brian K. Wylie, Robert Curry).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

- 1987 — one juvenile, 5 August–13 September, Long Point Flats (5 August & 6 September) and Big Creek Nat. Wildlife Area (13 September), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert Curry).
 1981 — one adult, 18 May–2 June (not to only 28 May as in *American Birds* 35:817), Selkirk Creek, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Brian Laidlaw) — photo on file.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

1987 — one adult, 2–3 May, Townsend, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Robert L. Waldhuber).

dark ibis sp. (*Plegadis* sp.)

- 1988 — one juvenile, 19 August, Big Creek Nat. Wildlife Area, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (James M. Holdsworth).
 1986 — one, 15–19 October, Guelph Lake, *Wellington* (15th) and Bloomingdale, *Waterloo* (17th to 19th) (Jeffrey E. Poklen, Virgil Martin).

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

1988 — five, 30 May–10 June, Pukaskwa Nat. Park (Pic River mouth), *Thunder Bay* (Stanley V. Phippen).

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

- 1988 — one adult, 11 March, Aylmer, *Elgin* (William G. Lindley, Colleen Lindley) — photos on file.
 1987 — one *frontalis* adult, 15 March, Port Royal, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. Wallace).

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)

1987 — one male, 4 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Michael Zeuck).

This record represents the third Cinnamon Teal to be recorded in northern Ontario; the previous two records were both in 1985 and were present 11–13 May at Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay*, and 1 July at Sable Island, *Rainy River* (*Ontario Birds* 4:7).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

- 1988 — one male, 30 April–6 May, Townsend, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Rohan A. van Twest, Marina van Twest).
- 1987 — one male, 19 April, Shirley's Bay, *Ottawa-Carleton* (V. Bernard Ladouceur).
 — one adult male, 26 September–27 October (not to only 24 October as in *American Birds* 42:65), Brittainia, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Raymond P. Holland, Simon Gawn).
- 1985 — one male, 21 April, Blenheim, *Kent* (Rohan A. van Twest, Marina van Twest).

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

- 1988 — one male, 17 June, Neys Prov. Park, *Thunder Bay* (Stephen J. O'Donnell).

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

- 1987/1988 — one immature, 26 December–3 January, Aldershot, *Halton* (D. James Mountjoy, Alan Wormington, Glenn Coady, Barry Gray) — photos on file.

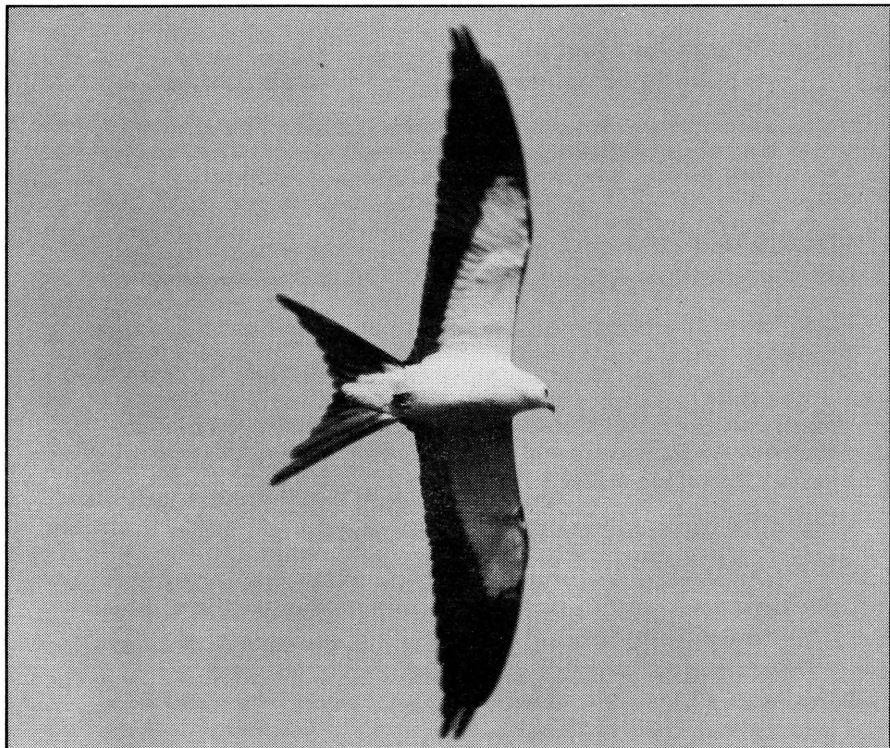
Only once before has a Black Vulture been recorded in Ontario during the winter: one was present at Long Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk*, on 16–17 February 1984 (*Ontario Birds* 3:7).

American Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

- 1988 — one immature, 16 August–5 September, Sturgeon Creek (16 August–5 September), Holiday Beach Cons. Area (25 August), and Point Pelee Nat. Park (5 September), *Essex* (Georgia A. Parsons, John W. Parsons, Alan Wormington, Michael A. Kielbaso, James N. Flynn) — photos on file.

Immature Black Vulture at Aldershot, *Halton*, from 26 December 1987 to 3 January 1988. Photo by *Glenn Coady*.





Immature Swallow-tailed Kite at Sturgeon Creek, Essex, 16 August to 5 September 1988. Photo by Alan Wormington.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

1988 — one dark phase adult, 22 September, Clear Creek, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Ronald C. Ridout).

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

1987 — one, 19 October, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (David Curson, Arun K. Bose).

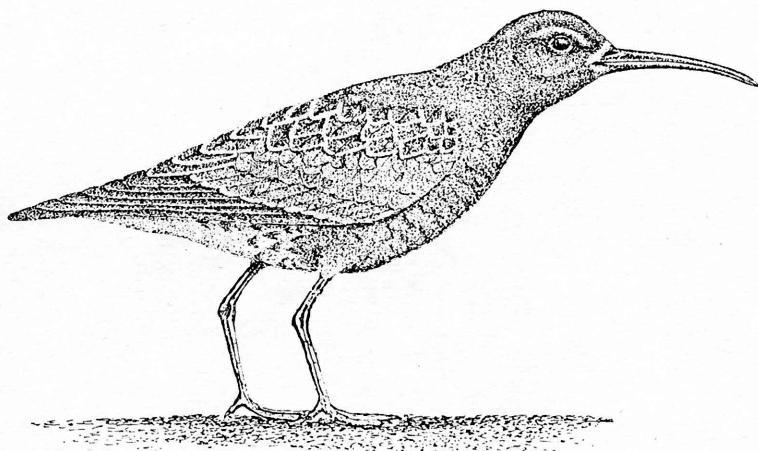
1986/1987 — one intermediate phase, 26 December–16 February (not beginning 15 January as in *American Birds* 41:276), Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (Karl Overman) — photo on file.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

1987 — one adult, 1–2 May, Wheatley Harbour, *Kent* (Alan Wormington).

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

1980 — one male, 5–12 September, Lemon Island (not McDonald Island as in *American Birds* 35:177; Weir & Quilliam 1980:12; and Speirs 1985:256), *Leeds & Grenville* (Robert Orr) — photo on file.



Ron Ridout

Curlew Sandpiper at the Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk*, on 20 May 1988.
Drawing by *Ronald C. Ridout*.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

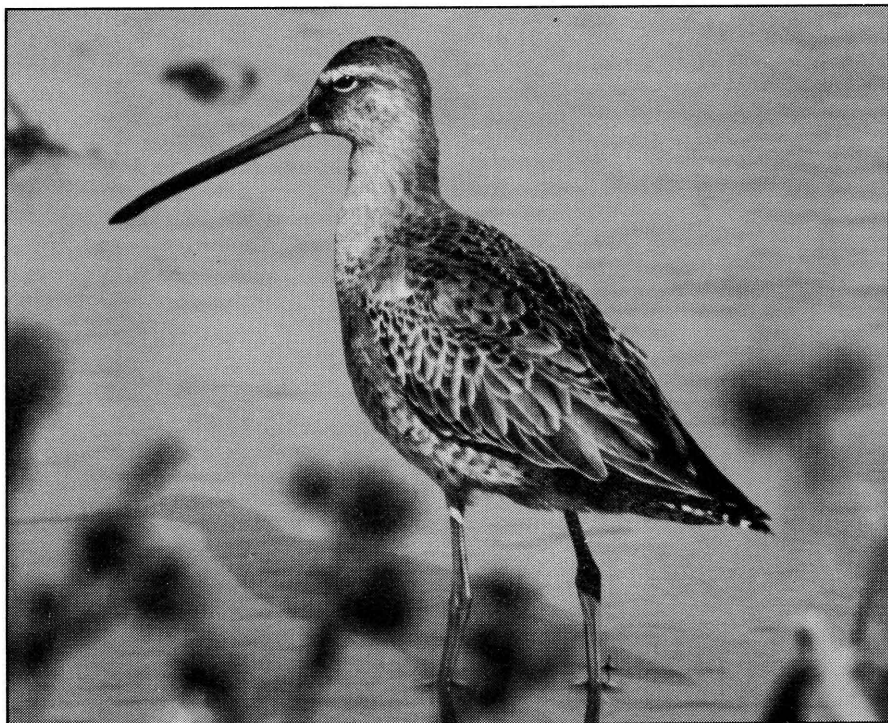
- 1988 — one adult summer, 13–20 May, Stoney Point, *Essex* (Robert W. Wilson, Graham L. Finch, Ian B. Gamble, Tim Sabo) — photo on file.
— one adult summer female, 20 May, Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Terric J. Woodrow, Ronald C. Ridout).
— one adult summer female, 7–8 August, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Ross C. Snider, Alan Wormington).

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

- 1988 — two juveniles, 15–20 September, one to 24 September, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).
— one juvenile, 18 September, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).
1987 — one juvenile, 30 September–5 October, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington, Nicholas G. Escott) — photos on file.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

- 1988 — one juvenile, 14 September, Long Point (Gravelly Bay and Tip), *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. Wallace).



Juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher at Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay*, 30 September to 5 October 1987. Photo by *Alan Wormington*.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

1988 — one *brachyrhynchus* adult summer, 22 July, Dundas Marsh, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (*Robert Curry*).

1987 — one *brachyrhynchus* first winter immature, 9–11 March, Wheatley Harbour, *Kent / Essex* (*Alan Wormington*).

The Dundas Marsh bird on 22 July is a remarkable record for the date and probably represents an exceptionally early fall migrant; if so, the migration timing thus matches Bonaparte's Gull (which breeds at the same latitude as Mew Gull), the adults of which regularly appear as fall migrants along the lower Great Lakes by late July, often by the hundreds. In 1986 a similar early record of Mew Gull occurred when a juvenile appeared on 27 August at Grand Bend, *Lambton* (*Ontario Birds* 5:49). The circumstances and a very detailed description of the Dundas Marsh Mew Gull has been published by Curry (1988).

The Mew Gull at Wheatley Harbour represents only the second spring record for Ontario; the first was present 29 April–1 May 1983 at Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (*Ontario Birds* 2:57).

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

- 1988 — one adult summer, 12–14 and 25 May (not observed between these dates), Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Roger Frost).
- one adult winter, 13–15 October, Nepean, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Stephen Gawn).
- 1987/1988 — one first winter immature, 28 December and 23 January (not observed between these dates) (not only 28 December as in *American Birds* 42:258), Sarnia, *Lambton* (Dennis F. Rupert, Tim Sabo).

A similar-plumaged California Gull observed at Aylmer, Quebec, on 12 November 1988 (*American Birds* 43:69) is almost certainly the Nepean individual; the two locations are only 10km apart on the Ottawa River.

Hummingbird sp. (*Selasphorus* sp.)

- 1988 — one adult male, 25 August, Holiday Beach Cons. Area, *Essex* (Michael A. Kielb).

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

- 1988 — one, 31 July–1 August, Rainy River, *Rainy River* (Robert J. Parsons, David H. Elder) — photos on file.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

- 1988 — one immature, 11–14 September (not to only 12 September as in *American Birds* 43:98), Rock Point Prov. Park, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Richard W. Knapton, Gordon Bellerby, Kayo J. Roy) — photos on file.
- 1987 — one, 25 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
- two (breeding pair), 9 June–12 July (with three unfledged young 12 July), Rainy River, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder, Tom Nash, Adrian Van Rooyen) — photos on file.
- one immature, 22 September, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Roy B. H. Smith, Tim R. Cleveca).
- one, 26 September, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth* (Alfred Epp).
- one adult, 7 November, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (David McNorton, Alan Wormington).

The nesting birds at Rainy River in 1987 add Western Kingbird to the list of breeding birds in Ontario.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

- 1987 — one, 26 September, Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington).

This is the fourth Blue-gray Gnatcatcher to be recorded in northern Ontario. The three previous records were 1–3 October 1979 at Caribou Island, *Thunder Bay*; 13 July 1980 at Rainy River, *Rainy River*; and 16 October 1981 at Netitishi Point, *Cochrane* (*Ontario Birds* 2:59).

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

- 1987 — one female, 15 October, Hawkeye Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Allan G. Harris).

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

- 1986/1987 — one, 16 November–8 March, Rattray Marsh Cons. Area, *Peel* (Alex Gray, Kayo J. Roy, Tim Sabo, Derek Spindlow) — photos on file.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

- 1987 — one male, 11 January–22 February (not to only 14 February as in *American Birds* 41:278), North York, *Metropolitan Toronto* (Brian R. Neale, Jacqueline Neale, Tim Sabo, Kayo J. Roy) — photos on file.
 — one male, 22–28 November, Rockcliffe Park, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Raymond P. Holland).

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

- 1987 — one, 16 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).
 — one, 28 September, Schreiber, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington, Nicholas G. Escott) — photos on file.

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*)

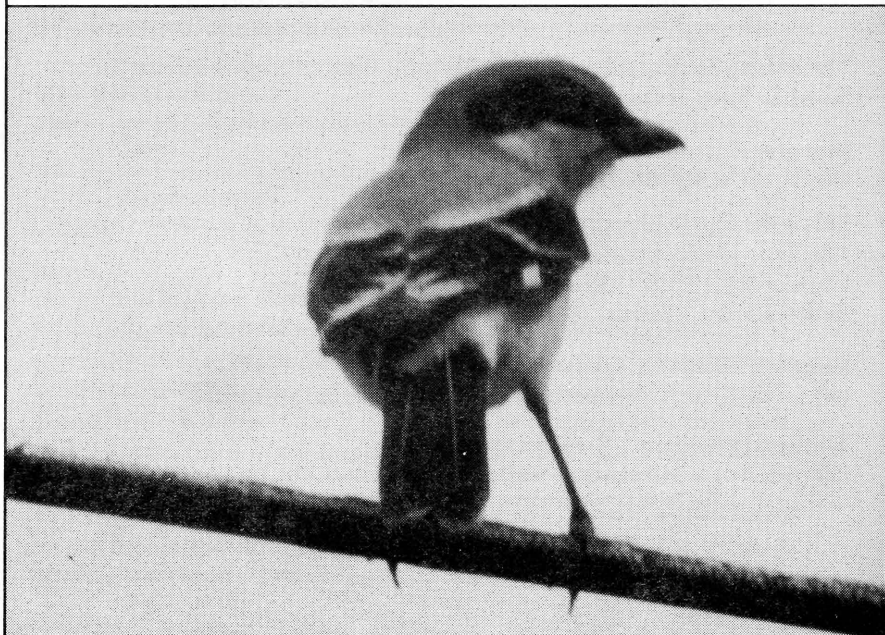
- 1988 — one male, 23–25 April, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Ellen A. Smout, Sue Bestard, Kevin Bestard).

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*)

- 1988 — one *albilora* male, 8 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington).
 — one *albilora* female, 11–14 May, Comber, *Essex* (John B. Schmelefske, Jon L. Dunn).
 1987/1988 — one *albilora* female, 18 December–5 January, Trenton, *Northumberland* (Claude Gray, Gertrude Gray, R.D. McRae) — photo on file.

A popular account of the Yellow-throated Warbler at Trenton, the latest fall migrant ever recorded in Ontario, has been published by Gray & Gray (1988).

Loggerhead Shrike at Schreiber, *Thunder Bay*, on 28 September 1987. Photo by *Alan Wormington*.



Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

1988 — one adult female or immature, 16 October, Silver Islet, *Thunder Bay* (Nicholas G. Escott).

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*)

1988 — one immature male, 9–16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Franklin E. Horne, Eileen Horne, Dennis F. Rupert, Alan Wormington, Kayo J. Roy) — photos on file.

— one immature male, 10 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Wayne C. Wilson, Alan Wormington).

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*)

1988 — one male, 15–18 June, Dryden, *Kenora* (Mrs. Lawrence Lamb) — photos on file.

Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)

1988 — one "eastern" male, 17–19 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington).

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassini*)

1987 — one immature, 15 August, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (George E. Wallace, Beverly Collier, Mary E. Gartshore) — photos on file.

This Cassin's Sparrow represents the fifth record for Ontario; to date there are still very few records of this species in eastern North America, with Ontario providing the bulk of these records.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

1987 — one adult, 16 July, Dunrobin, *Ottawa-Carleton* (Raymond P. Holland) — photos on file.

— one immature, 23–24 August, Aylmer, *Elgin* (George E. Wallace).

Since the Lark Sparrow is a well-known early fall migrant, the bird at Dunrobin on 16 July 1987 possibly falls into this category. For example, the species has appeared as early as 3 August at Sable Island, Nova Scotia (McLaren 1981:79); 7, 25 and 28 July in coastal New York (Bull 1964:453–454); 17 July in Maryland (Robbins & Bystrak 1977:38); and 26 July in coastal Virginia (Kain *et al.* 1987:111).

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

1988 — one adult male, 1 June, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk* (Darin C. Bennett, Roger Frost) — photo on file.

— one immature male, 29 August, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington) — photos on file.

The Point Pelee Lark Bunting on 29 August 1988 represents the earliest fall migrant ever recorded in Ontario.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

1987 — one immature, 1 October, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Alan Wormington, Nicholas G. Escott) — photos on file.

This is the fourth Golden-crowned Sparrow to be recorded in the province, and the first in northern Ontario.



Immature Lark Bunting at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*, on 29 August 1988. Photo by *Alan Wormington*.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

1987 — one female, 7–25 October, Atikokan, *Rainy River* (David H. Elder, Tom Nash, Nicholas G. Escott, Alan Wormington) — photos on file.

For a detailed account of this Great-tailed Grackle, the first to be recorded in Ontario, see Elder (1988).

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

1980 — one, 12–18 November, Brampton, *Peel* (Margaret E. Schram) — photo on file.

This Brambling represents the first record for Ontario and pre-dates the occurrence of 23–26 October 1983 at Atikokan, *Rainy River*, a record which (at the time) was published as the first for the province (Elder 1984).

Unaccepted Records: *Identification accepted, origin questionable*

Species in this category are those considered almost certainly to be escaped or released from captivity, even though wild occurrence is a remote possibility. Species placed here could be accepted later if future records clearly established a pattern of occurrence suggesting wild (rather than captive) origin.

Ringed Teal (*Callonetta leucophrys*)

1986 — one male, 24 May–16 July, Toronto, *Metropolitan Toronto* (George A. Anthony) — photos on file.

Unaccepted Records: *Identification uncertain*

In the majority of the records listed below, the description presented in the reports was deemed insufficient to establish with certainty the identity of the species claimed; in few cases was the committee actually convinced an incorrect identification was made.

- 1988 — Glossy Ibis, 14 May, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*.
 — Cinnamon Teal (three), 29 April, Marathon, *Thunder Bay*.
 — Pomarine Jaeger, 20 September, Long Point Flats, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.
 — Ivory Gull, 18 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Roseate Tern (three), 5 May, Sturgeon Creek, *Essex*.
 — Least Tern, 6 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Bridled Tern, 20 September, Long Point Tip, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.
 — Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 22 July, Fisher's Glen, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.
 — Fish Crow, 16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Bewick's Wren, 2 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Bewick's Wren, 17 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Blue Grosbeak, 11 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Chestnut-collared Longspur, 4 June, Rainy River, *Rainy River*.
 — Eurasian Siakin, 4–8 February, Keene, *Peterborough*.
 — Eurasian Siakin, 20 February and 6 April (not observed between these dates), Peterborough, *Peterborough*.
 — Eurasian Siakin, 21–27 February, Smith Township, *Peterborough* — photos on file.
- 1987 — Pacific Loon, 29 November, Baie du Dore, *Drummond* — photos on file.
 — Western Grebe, 18–19 October, Fisher's Glen, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.
 — Curlew Sandpiper, 25 September, Hillman Marsh, *Essex*.
 — Pomarine Jaeger, 15 September, Big Creek Nat. Wildlife Area, *Haldimand-Norfolk*.
 — Pomarine Jaeger, 27 September, Van Wagner's Beach, *Hamilton-Wentworth*.
 — Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 24 June, Blenheim, *Kent*.
 — Townsend's Solitaire, 3 June, McKellar, *Parry Sound*.
 — Eurasian Blackbird, 17 May, north of Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Swainson's Warbler, 12 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Western Tanager, 16 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Black-headed Grosbeak, 19 September, Port Stanley, *Elgin*.
 — Bachman's Sparrow, 13 May, Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
 — Lark Sparrow, 3 October, north of Point Pelee Nat. Park, *Essex*.
- 1984 — California Gull, 9 December, Queenston, *Niagara*.
- 1976 — Western Bluebird, 17 May, Fanshawe Lake, *Middlesex*.

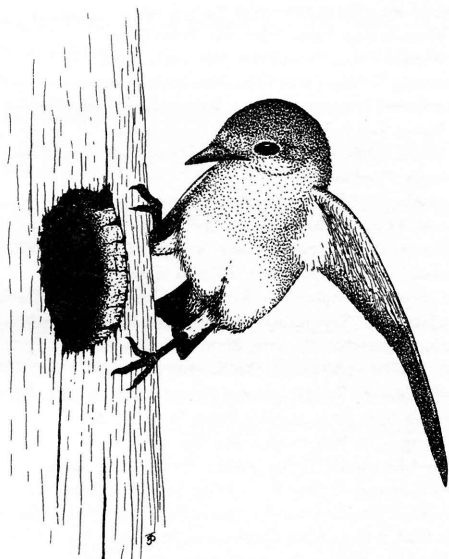
Acknowledgements

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Eastern Bluebird/Drawing by Ross D. James