

Articles

Fort Severn 1940 - with Cliff Hope

by
Ross D. James

Introduction

On a third trip in as many years to the remote northwestern parts of Ontario, Cliff Hope visited Fort Severn, a small native community on the banks of the Severn River about ten kilometres inland from the Hudson Bay coast (Figure 1). Hope's trip remains the only extended trip specifically to study bird life there, and many significant observations resulted from it.

Hope left Toronto with the same travelling companions that accompanied him to Attawapiskat Lake in 1939, L.A. Prince and W.B. Scott (James 1994). They left on 4 June, going by train to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Melville, Saskatchewan, and then northeast to The Pas and Ilford, Manitoba. They remained in Manitoba for a week, finally flying to Fort Severn on 15 June, along the Sachigo and Severn Rivers. The rivers initially follow a channel between fairly high banks. Some 80 km from Sachigo Lake, the route entered the Hudson Bay Lowland; numerous small lakes of the shield country gave way to vast stretches of muskeg.

Fort Severn was a community of only about 90 Cree Indians. The Hudson Bay Company manager, Jack Wilson, was the only non-native person there. The HBC post consisted of five buildings in a one acre clearing about ten metres above the

river on the river bank. The ROM party set up "camp" in one of the HBC warehouses.

Hope describes the country immediately about the post as a mass of stunted willows. Large islands in the river were covered with a nearly impenetrable growth of gnarled and dwarfed willows. The river shores, subject to tidal action, had wide mud flats with gravelly pools and then dense growths of poplars and willows on higher banks. To the west of the town was open spruce-tamarack muskeg.

Up river from the post, the riverbanks were often more precipitous, some reaching 15 m high, with chunks falling away here and there as water eroded the bases. The tops of the riverbanks were well wooded with spruce forests, some trees as large as 30 cm in diameter. Sphagnum moss and reindeer lichen carpeted the forest floor. The river islands only had poplars and willow, some of the poplars on larger islands reaching substantial size, as well. Back from the better drained banks, away from the river, the country became more of a black spruce muskeg.

About halfway to the coast from the town, the last trees were seen on the flat "barrens" extending to the bay. Patches of stunted willows and alders fewer than 30 cm high

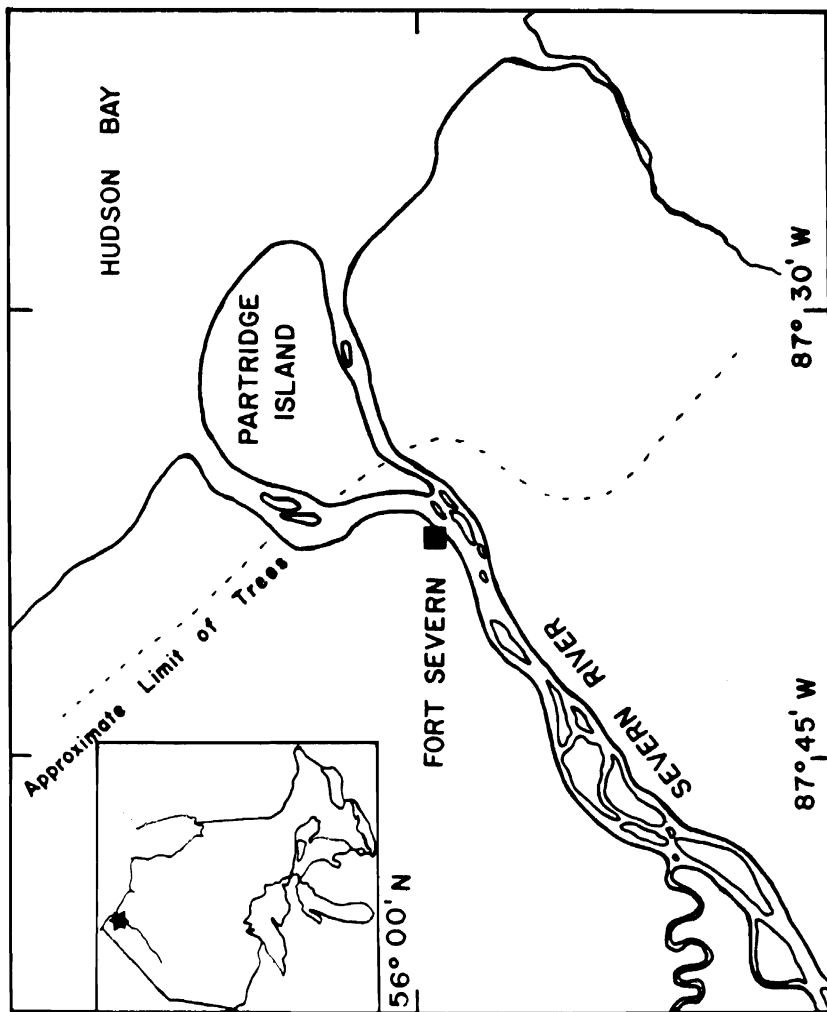


Figure 1: Map of the Fort Severn area, Ontario.

persisted for some distance amid open areas of "grass". This was dotted with innumerable pools, ponds and streams. The willows became more stunted and pools more numerous closer to the coast, until finally only "coarse grass" remained, over which high tides flowed. Finally, wide mudflats bordered the bay. Open water extended out several kilometres to the ice cover still present offshore.

Travel was largely on foot; thus he might have encountered more things along the coast if he had been more mobile. He was able to walk to most available habitats, however. Several canoe trips were made with Jack Wilson's canoe to coastal areas and once up the river for about 12 km. He obviously had no spotting scope, so many birds off or along the coast could not be identified. They had to contend with mosquitoes in warmer weather, but these did not seem to limit activities. Persistent

cold rains were probably more of an impediment initially, and they experienced 5 cm of snow on 19 June.

They left Fort Severn on 23 July, some 38 days after arrival. They had intended to stay about another week, but the schooner M.S. Severn, that was to take them to Churchill, Manitoba, arrived early. They spent most of the night packing in order to be able to leave with the ship the next day. The following day, they were still weaving their way through floating ice on Hudson Bay as they travelled northwest.

Again I have indicated, for each appropriate species in the following accounts, by "#" that specimens were preserved in the ROM, and by "*" that nesting/breeding was clearly documented. Details are on specimens or nest record cards in the museum.

Species Accounts

- Red-throated Loon**, *Gavia stellata*: # Rare; he saw two flying on 1 July, one swam down river on 15 July and two were brought to him from the coast on 12 July.
- Pacific Loon**, *Gavia pacifica*: # Not seen by Hope at all; the only evidence he had of it was a wing brought in by an Indian from a bird taken near the coast on 3 July.
- Common Loon**, *Gavia immer*: # Fairly common; from one to as many as 30 seen on most days. Most were in small groups on the open bay or flying over and swimming on the open river. He had no indication of nesting and most, if not all, were likely nonbreeding birds.
- Horned Grebe**, *Podiceps auritus*: # Also never seen by Hope; wings and feet of two taken locally were brought to him on 2 July.
- American Bittern**, *Botaurus lentiginosus*: *# Relatively rare, the usual being only one heard on about one quarter of the days. A bird brought to Hope on 17 June was a female with several ruptured follicles in the ovary, indicating local nesting. He heard one occasionally in spruce-tamarack bogs near town through most of his stay there.
- Great Blue Heron**, *Ardea herodias*: # The skin of a bird taken 1 September of the previous year was given to Hope.
- Canada Goose**, *Branta canadensis*: *# Common, with flocks of as many as 200, but was generally inconspicuous most of the time. Several downy young were brought to him on a couple of occasions.
- Green-winged Teal**, *Anas crecca*: *# Very rare; a skinned and dried head was brought to him on 9 July, and on 16 July a female was taken with a partially shelled egg that would soon have been laid, indicating local breeding.

- American Black Duck**, *Anas rubripes*: # Rarely seen anywhere but on the mudflats bordering Hudson Bay and only a very few were identified. There were many unidentifiable ducks far offshore, however, more of which could have been nonbreeding birds of this species.
- Mallard**, *Anas platyrhynchos*: # Even rarer than the black duck; only four were identified, and a couple more brought to him, all in mid July, suggesting that most, if not all, were nonbreeding birds summering on the coast.
- Northern Pintail**, *Anas acuta*: * # Thinly distributed in the muskeg and along the river and bay shores. Although not many were seen, a sizeable breeding population was present, as numerous young of various sizes were brought to Hope on a couple of occasions.
- American Wigeon**, *Anas americana*: * # Less numerous than pintail, however a breeding population was present. A female had an egg ready for laying on 18 June and ducklings were brought to Hope on 9, 10 and 21 July.
- Greater Scaup**, *Aythya marila*: # Rare; seen on only two occasions (22 June and 1 July) with no indication of breeding. Birds were also brought to him on 18 June and 19 July, suggesting some were probably there all summer.
- Lesser Scaup**, *Aythya affinis*: Very rare; only one pair was seen on a small bog pond on 24 June.
- White-winged Scoter**, *Melanitta fusca*: Seldom seen, but apparently common; two flocks of 40 to 50 birds and two groups of three on the river were the only encounters. Many of the offshore birds could also have been scoters of this or another species.
- Red-breasted Merganser**, *Mergus serrator*: Rare; he saw only two males and a female-plumaged bird together on the river on 29 July.
- Osprey**, *Pandion haliaetus*: # Rare, and no evidence of nesting was found. However, from one to three were seen on eight days through July, indicating summer residency.
- Northern Harrier**, *Circus cyaneus*: Fairly common in coastal areas where he saw as many as ten one day. From one to four were seen on about one third of the days there.
- Rough-legged Hawk**, *Buteo lagopus*: A single individual on 17 June flying over the river shores within a couple of kilometres of town was the only observation.
- American Kestrel**, *Falco sparverius*: Prince reported seeing one on 20 June for the only observation.
- Merlin**, *Falco columbarius*: * # Rare; seen on only four occasions, but he was able to find two nests. One appeared to be an old crow nest in a patch of stunted spruce west of town, and the other was on an island in the river in a much larger spruce tree south of town.
- Spruce Grouse**, *Dendragapus canadensis*: * # Rarely encountered; a female with a brood on 3 July, and a female and half grown young found by Scott on 17 July.
- Willow Ptarmigan**, *Lagopus lagopus*: * # Fairly rare; he saw only one in a bog on 20 June, and when leaving he saw five from the boat at the river mouth. Natives brought him several others on two occasions, one a female, 18 June, that had ruptured follicles to indicate local laying had taken place.
- Yellow Rail**, *Coturnicops noveboracensis*: # Very common in the marshes near the coast. Hope spent the night of 16/17 July out there and estimated hearing about 100 birds. The party was able to creep up on several, at least one of which was clearly seen by flashlight.
- Sora**, *Porzana carolina*: Heard calling only once in a grassy marsh within 2 km of town.
- Semipalmated Plover**, *Charadrius semipalmatus*: * # A common species along river shores with mud flats and gravel bars, often including scattered "grass" patches. He located three nests and saw one group of recently hatched young. Although these nests were not the first reported in the province (Peck and James 1993), they provided the first specimen evidence of nesting in Ontario. Contrary to what was reported in Peck and James (1983), and repeated by Hussell (in Cadman et al. 1987), Hope collected both eggs and downy young in Ontario prior to Manning's collecting of young at Cape Henrietta Maria in 1947 (Manning 1952). The eggs from much earlier nests at Moose River in 1860 may have been collected, but, if so, the whereabouts of the specimens is apparently unknown (Todd 1963).
- Killdeer**, *Charadrius vociferus*: Rare; heard on only three occasions, twice shortly after arrival and once a month later.
- Greater Yellowlegs**, *Tringa melanoleuca*: # Rare, with small numbers of migrants appearing on coastal mudflats after 10 July.

- Lesser Yellowlegs**, *Tringa flavipes*: * # Relatively few and thinly scattered as far as observations in June were concerned, but by mid July substantial numbers (100+) had begun to congregate on coastal mudflats. On 8 July he had a very agitated pair in a grassy slough in spruce-tamarack muskeg northwest of town, but could not find the young he felt were there. The following day an Indian brought him a downy young to finally confirm breeding by this species.
- Solitary Sandpiper**, *Tringa solitaria*: Rare; he saw only two on 7 July, both flying overhead.
- Spotted Sandpiper**, *Actitis macularia*: * # Common along river shores; he found a couple of nests and one group of recently hatched young.
- Whimbrel**, *Numenius phaeopus*: * # Rare, apart from migrants. A single female brought to Hope on 3 July had an incubation patch, ruptured follicles and a still enlarged oviduct, clearly suggesting local breeding. On 11 July on coastal tundra, he encountered two very agitated pairs and thought he heard young, but could not locate them. The only other observation was of about 30 near the coast on 17 July.
- Sempalmated Sandpiper**, *Calidris pusilla*: Virtually absent; he identified two along the river shore on 1 July for his only observation.
- Least Sandpiper**, *Calidris minutilla*: * # Common on the tundra. On 1 July he found two recently hatched young with parents and flushed a male from three fresh eggs. A well feathered young with parents was also found on 17 July.
- Pectoral Sandpiper**, *Calidris melanotos*: # Encountered only as migrants along the coastal area on 17 July; he saw about 15 that day.
- Common Snipe**, *Gallinago gallinago*: * # Widespread and seen regularly, but uncommonly. He found a single egg in the muskeg on 21 June that may have belonged to this species and a recently flying juvenile on 20 July also indicated local breeding.
- Red-necked Phalarope**, *Phalaropus lobatus*: * # Reasonably common in shallow tundra pools near the coast. It was undoubtedly breeding, although only ruptured follicles and brood patches tended to confirm that.
- Long-tailed Jaeger**, *Stercorarius longicaudus*: # Rare; encountered on only three occasions over the period, once a group of five along the river shore on 20 June.
- Bonaparte's Gull**, *Larus philadelphia*: # Seen along the river in groups of three to eight on only three occasions in June, and no evidence of nesting was apparent.
- Herring Gull**, *Larus argentatus*: # Uncommon for the most part, with one or two seen most days. The only suggestion of local breeding was some young of the year in a small flock with adults near the river mouth as Hope departed the area.
- Arctic Tern**, *Sterna paradisaea*: * # Sporadically seen, usually only one or two, but after mid July, as many as a dozen near the coast. Breeding was indicated by a bird that contained an egg nearly ready to lay, brought to him on 18 June.
- Northern Hawk Owl**, *Surnia ulula*: # Single birds were noted on 21 June and 1 July.
- Short-eared Owl**, *Asio flammeus*: * # Fairly common, with one to three birds, and occasionally more, seen on half the days there. A nest with five young was found 19 July in a dry patch of stunted willows on Partridge Island.
- Belted Kingfisher**, *Ceryle alcyon*: Only a single bird was reported to Hope on 3 July.
- Northern Flicker**, *Colaptes auratus*: * # Seen on two occasions near tree line, and up river several kilometres, a nest with large young was found 7 July for the only other observation.
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, *Empidonax flaviventris*: * # Uncommon in the spruce forests up river; he flushed a female from a nest on 15 July.
- Alder Flycatcher**, *Empidonax alnorum*: * # Common and seen virtually every day; he found a nest partially constructed on 15 July that later had eggs.
- Least Flycatcher**, *Empidonax minimus*: Heard calling only once in a poplar grove on Partridge Island on 19 July.
- Horned Lark**, *Eremophila alpestris*: * # Locally uncommon along the gravel flats of the river. He was probably late for much nesting activity. Two flying and full-grown juveniles were seen 9 July.
- Tree Swallow**, *Tachycineta bicolor*: Absent except for two birds observed about the Hudson Bay post on 23 June.

- Bank Swallow**, *Riparia riparia*: # Noted 9 July (four birds) apparently trying to excavate in a sandy patch along the river near Fort Severn, but not subsequently seen there. Two more were seen near Partridge Island 17 July.
- Cliff Swallow**, *Hirundo pyrrhonota*: # Three birds were noted investigating the eaves of buildings on 2 July. One bird was brought to Hope later in the day. No other sightings were made.
- Gray Jay**, *Perisoreus canadensis*: * # Uncommon, but frequently observed throughout the stay. Juvenile-plumaged birds were no doubt locally raised.
- American Crow**, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*: * # Fairly common, with as many as ten seen on a couple of occasions. He found a nest with small young on 17 June.
- Common Raven**, *Corvus corax*: Absent except for a single individual flying over the tundra on 10 July.
- Boreal Chickadee**, *Parus hudsonicus*: * # Rare near the community, more usual in spruce woods up river. A juvenile with a parent was encountered 22 July.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, *Regulus calendula*: # Uncommon in spruce woods, but he was unable to confirm breeding.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush**, *Catharus minimus*: * # Fairly common in the area; he was taken to a nest in stunted willows near camp on 2 July by Indian boys. He revisited the nest in the evening to get a good look at the adult before collecting the first nest found in the province. He also came upon a brood of young out of the nest on 15 July.
- Swainson's Thrush**, *Catharus ustulatus*: * # Uncommon in black spruce muskeg, yet he was able to locate two nests, 29 June and 7 July.
- Hermit Thrush**, *Catharus guttatus*: Almost absent; he heard only one in full song in the spruce muskeg on 3 July.
- American Robin**, *Turdus migratorius*: * # Commonly seen, yet characteristically difficult to confirm as a breeder. Adults feeding fairly large young on 6 July provided the only breeding evidence.
- American Pipit**, *Anthus rubescens*: # Very rare; he recorded them only twice and a bird was brought to him on another occasion.
- European Starling**, *Sturnus vulgaris*: # Was not noted alive, but he found the desiccated remains of one in the outhouse of the Hudson Bay post on 17 June to verify that it had occurred.
- Tennessee Warbler**, *Vermivora peregrina*: # Fairly common throughout; however, evidence of nesting eluded him.
- Orange-crowned Warbler**, *Vermivora celata*: # Not nearly as numerous as the preceding species, but a substantial population was obviously resident there in summer. Again breeding evidence was not found.
- Yellow Warbler**, *Dendroica petechia*: * # Common in the dense willow scrub. Nests were found on three occasions in early July.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler**, *Dendroica coronata*: * # Uncommon, usually only encountered up river in spruce woods. A nest and eggs were located 2 July by Prince.
- Palm Warbler**, *Dendroica palmarum*: # Rarely encountered, but a brood patch on one bird suggested the possibility of local breeding.
- Blackpoll Warbler**, *Dendroica striata*: * # A common species in spruce-tamarack muskeg. He watched a female go to a nest on 2 July, and Indian boys showed him another nest on 17 July. These were the first two nests recorded in the province.
- Northern Waterthrush**, *Seiurus noveboracensis*: * # One of the commonest species there, seen virtually every day. He found a nest on 29 June and observed adults feeding recently fledged young on 12 July.
- Wilson's Warbler**, *Wilsonia pusilla*: # Fairly common, seen almost as often and in similar numbers to the preceding species. Although it undoubtedly bred there, he did not encounter evidence of that.
- Rufous-sided Towhee**, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*: # A single vagrant male was encountered 29 June, seeming "strangely out of its element" in a spruce bog.
- American Tree Sparrow**, *Spizella arborea*: * # Very common among stunted willows. He found two nests on 1 July.

- Savannah Sparrow**, *Passerculus sandwichensis*: * # A very common species in any "grassy" patches along rivers or in open muskeg. He found nests on three separate days, and recently fledged young on several other occasions.
- Le Conte's Sparrow**, *Ammodramus leconteii*: Rare, encountered on only four occasions; however, he found at least six in one "grassy" patch on the tundra. Although no doubt breeding, the only evidence seen involved an agitated male on 8 July.
- Fox Sparrow**, *Passerella iliaca*: * # A common species seen virtually every day. Young of the year were out of the nest by the 25th and 26th of June. He was subsequently shown a nest with a small young on 17 July that could have been a second nesting.
- Song Sparrow**, *Melospiza melodia*: * # Also common and seen virtually every day. He found a nest with eggs on 27 June and encountered a juvenile bird on 13 July.
- Lincoln's Sparrow**, *Melospiza lincolni*: * # Uncommon in muskeg areas. A nest found 24 June was identified next day as belonging to this species.
- Swamp Sparrow**, *Melospiza georgiana*: * # Uncommon, usually encountered only once or twice on about half the days there. He found two nests, one 25 June and one 3 July.
- White-throated Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia albicollis*: * # Common throughout the muskeg areas. Nests with eggs were found 16 and 21 June. Double brooding is suggested by another nest with eggs found 20 July.
- White-crowned Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia leucophrys*: * # A common species seen virtually every day. Nests with eggs were found 18 and 25 June.
- Harris's Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia querula*: # Was an exceedingly rare bird at that time. He saw only a single bird on 28 June. That one, however, was a female with the "bare belly of an incubating bird", suggesting that nesting may have been in progress nearby.
- Dark-eyed Junco**, *Junco hyemalis*: # Uncommon, although at least one was seen most days. He noted no evidence of breeding, however.
- Smith's Longspur**, *Calcarius pictus*: * # An uncommon bird on the tundra. The first time he encountered them was on 22 June and he flushed a female off a nest, providing the first reported for this species in Ontario.
- Snow Bunting**, *Plectrophenax nivalis*: # Very rare and unlikely to have been breeding. A single female 17 June and two males 1 July, all feeding on the river mudflats, were the only observations.
- Rusty Blackbird**, *Euphagus carolinus*: # Uncommon and seldom seen until mid July when a group of 30 including flying juveniles was seen. Although the young were probably locally raised (short-tailed), they were well able to fly.
- Pine Grosbeak**, *Pinicola enucleator*: # Rare; he encountered singles on two occasions, and once a group of five. A male with enlarged testes and a female with an incubation patch, both on 3 July, suggested local breeding.
- White-winged Crossbill**, *Loxia leucoptera*: Seldom seen; however, flocks of 25 on 24 June and 200 on 6 July indicate that local occurrence was to be expected.
- Common Redpoll**, *Carduelis flammea*: * # Fairly common in tundra areas; he found three nests in July.
- House Sparrow**, *Passer domesticus*: # Rare; however, three or four were occasionally seen about the Hudson Bay post. His notes give no indication of surprise at their being there.

Several people had previously made casual observations of birds at Fort Severn. These were officers of the Hudson Bay Company stationed there, beginning with Andrew Graham in 1771 (Manning 1952). Graham collected a small number of mammals, birds and fish that were described by Forster (1772), among them the type specimens of Great

Gray Owl, Boreal Chickadee, and White-crowned Sparrow. There were a number of other observers over the years, but the dates and specific localities of collecting activities seem to be somewhat uncertain for many (Manning 1952). However, most of the nonpasserine and many of the passerine species encountered by Hope in 1940 had previously been

recorded either in the environs of the fort itself, or in similar habitats in nearby areas along the coast. Hope's trip was an important one, nonetheless, as he was the first to travel to that part of the province specifically to study the bird life there, and many significant observations were made. Even where a species had previously been recorded, there was virtually no information on abundance or breeding status available.

Manning (1952) provided a list of species recorded at Fort Severn (and other places along the Hudson and James Bay coasts) from previously published accounts, but not including Hope's observations. Manning himself did not arrive at Severn until 15 August and thus, was too late in the season to add many passerine species to the list. Singing would have largely ceased for the year, birds would have been molting and rather inconspicuous, and some could even have migrated out of the area. Also, Manning apparently did not spend any time far enough inland to be among any habitats with significant numbers of large trees. Although Hope did not record even all species previously seen there, he gathered new information about many of them and he was able to add many species to the list of those known to frequent that part of the province in summer.

One nonpasserine species found easily by Hope, but surprisingly not mentioned anywhere near Fort Severn by Manning, was the Common Snipe. Northern Flicker also was not mentioned, but would have been harder to find. Among the passerine species not included by Manning, but which were recorded by Hope, were: Yellow-bellied

Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Common Raven, Swainson's Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Le Conte's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Song Sparrow. Although Le Conte's Sparrow might have been difficult to find, most of the others would seem to have been conspicuous enough that it is surprising that they were not previously recorded.

He also made the first summering records of Harris's Sparrow, that might have just been extending its range into that part of the province. He noted the first nests of Gray-cheeked Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler and Smith's Longspur for the province, and finally established Semipalmated Plover as a nester in Ontario. He had the first strong evidence of Whimbrel breeding, and eventually what proved to be the first breeding evidence of Lesser Yellowlegs was obtained there (see James 1992). He found that both House Sparrows and European Starlings had succeeded in penetrating to even this remote settlement by that time. He recorded a number of species there that were not subsequently found during the breeding bird atlas project of 1981-1985 (Cadman et al. 1987), including: Spruce Grouse, Sora, Northern Hawk Owl, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Cliff Swallow, Swainson's Thrush, Le Conte's Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak and White-winged Crossbill. The Spruce Grouse, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Swainson's Thrush he even confirmed breeding and any of the others might have been, although

some may be sporadic there.

Hope also recorded Horned Grebe and American Kestrel, both of which have subsequently been found there. On the other hand, several species have since been recorded that he did not see. Some are probably more recent arrivals (Ross's Goose, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, and Clay-colored Sparrow) or have recolonized subsequent to being decimated by shooting during the fur trading era (Tundra Swan and Sandhill Crane). Various migrant shorebirds and waterfowl, Peregrine Falcons and Gyrfalcons might have been seen had he been there longer, or had access to a spotting scope. A number of species not seen are rarer there and could easily have been missed in any one year, including: Northern Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Great Horned Owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin. However, he did not see Oldsquaw, Common Merganser, Hudsonian Godwit, Dunlin, Parasitic Jaeger, or Barn Swallow where there seems a higher probability that he might have.

The most commonly seen species among the nonpasserines were Common Loon, Semipalmated Plover, and Spotted Sandpiper. Canada Goose was also locally very numerous, but seldom encountered, while Lesser Yellowlegs and Herring Gulls were regular but somewhat less common. Among the passerines, Savannah Sparrow and American Tree Sparrow appeared to be the most numerous. Only slightly less numerous were Alder Flycatcher, American Robin, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Yellow

Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Wilson's Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

Although Hope spent considerably less time at Fort Severn than at Lake Attawapiskat (see James 1994), his list of species was marginally longer. This could easily be accounted for by the greater numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds and nonpasserines in general, more readily visible in the open habitats near the coast. At both places, Common Ravens were almost totally absent. Apparently they were considered pests by trappers (Comeau in Manning 1952) and many may have been trapped unintentionally or even shot.

Among the most abundant species at both Attawapiskat and Severn were Spotted Sandpiper, Alder Flycatcher, American Robin, Yellow Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Wilson's Warbler, White-throated Sparrow and Song Sparrow.

More time and effort could undoubtedly add more to the observations already made at Fort Severn in this subarctic environment. However, Hope's trip stands as the most extensive and informative effort to date.

Acknowledgements

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librarians at the ROM for access to the journals, and particularly to Charlotte Goodwin for a copy of relevant material. The figure was prepared with the assistance of Brian Boyle of the Photography Department of the museum.

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Notes

Atlantic Puffin: third Ontario record

by
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On 14 October 1994, while birding at the Moses-Saunders Power Dam at Cornwall, Ontario, I observed a juvenile Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), from the observation deck on the American side of the St. Lawrence River. I first located the bird at approximately 1400 h, mid-way across the headpond above the power dam, sleeping and swimming about, slowly drifting towards the American side of the dam. I observed the bird for over two hours and it was apparent that it was in a

weakened condition. Despite the calm waters, the bird's wings were drooped, it never dove, and it spent most of its time floating along the wall of the power dam.

The following day, after a morning of high winds and rain, the puffin was finally discovered again in late afternoon from the Canadian side of the river by a number of observers. Locating a small black and white bird on such a large, open expanse of water, especially during strong winds, is very difficult. On