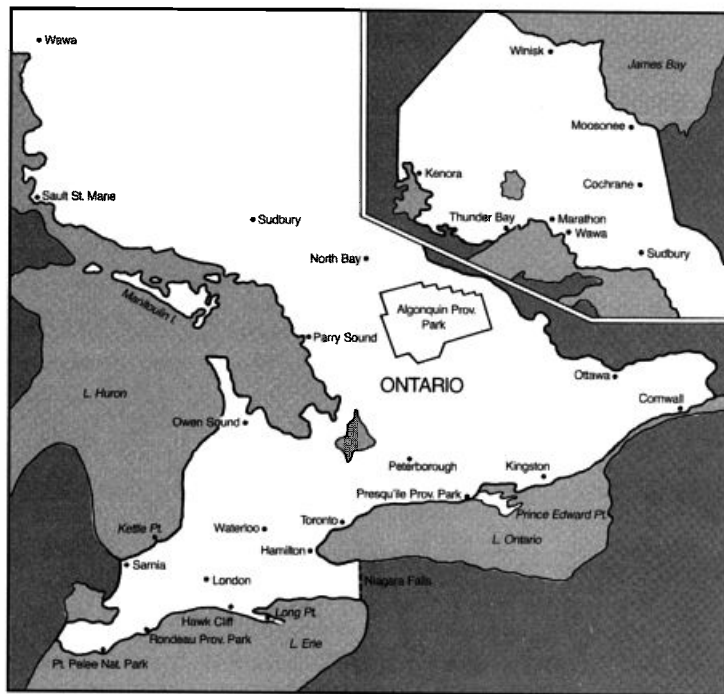


Ontario



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This fall was another long, relatively uneventful, and mild season, sometimes cool and wet in the north, but generally warm and dry in the south. Many southbound migrants were a week or two behind their normal schedules and several record-late dates were reported. However, hawk migration was slightly earlier than usual, if anything; hawks and eagles moved through Ontario in excellent numbers. Another effect of the warm weather was that bountiful cone crops in areas such as Algonquin Provincial Park flourished early and seeds dispersed, causing most finches to abandon southern areas of the province by mid-season. There were few major rarities, but a welcome incursion of northern owls was under way across the province by late September, with unprecedented numbers of Boreal Owls closely followed by a widespread influx of Northern Hawk Owls. Winter arrived suddenly in the third week of November, with markedly lower temperatures and heavy snowfall in some areas, hastening the departure of any lingering migrants.

Abbreviations: KFN (Kingston Field Naturalists); L.P.B.O. (Long Point Bird Observatory); ROM (Royal Ontario Museum); TBFN (Thunder Bay Field Naturalists); T.B.O. (Toronto Bird Observatory); T.C.B.O. (Thunder Cape Bird Observatory). Place names in *italics* refer to counties, districts, and regional municipalities.

Loons Through Vultures

There were 150 Red-throated Loons at Kettle Pt., L. Huron, 11 Nov (AHR), and a Pacific Loon spent one day at Neebing Marsh, Thunder Bay, 4 Nov (NGE). The 317 Horned Grebes tallied 22 Oct were a high count for Pt. Pelee N.P. (AW). Red-necked Grebe numbers peaked at 444 off W. Bay, Manitoulin I., 19 Oct (CB). Eared Grebes on L. Ontario included singles off Burlington 19 Aug (KML), Darlington P.P. 27 Aug (THo), Pt. Pelee 4 Oct (AW, KML), Wicklow 16 Oct (CGo), La Salle Marina 18–19 Oct (RZD), and Stoney Creek 21 Oct (GE). The Western Grebe on Rainy L. 23 Aug (AH) provided the first-ever fall record for *Rainy River*.

A juv. Northern Gannet, first seen 21 Oct off Stoney Creek (LF), was subsequently reported along the L. Ontario shoreline between Fifty Pt. and Bronte until 20 Nov (m.ob.); 2 juv. gannets were off Stoney Creek 23 Oct (BW). The 40

American White Pelicans at Black Bay, L. Superior, 16 Aug (LE) suggest that nesting evidence for the Great Lakes is imminent. In the Sault Ste. Marie area there were 2 white pelicans the first two weeks of Oct, one feeding on dead salmon at the St. Mary's R. rapids; the second bird appeared sickly and was captured for rehabilitation (*vide* BKn). On L. Ontario, Double-crested Cormorants continue to increase exponentially, prompting discussions on population control at several locations, including Presqu'ile P.P. The **Anhinga** at Delaware, *Middlesex*, continued to delight many observers until 16 Sep (*vide* PR).

A late Least Bittern was at Dundas Marsh, Hamilton, 30 Sep (RZD). At least 69 Great Egrets were reported in the s., with record-high counts of 38 at Pt. Pelee 12 Aug (AW) and 16 at Dundas Marsh 30 Sep (RZD). Rondeau P.P. had a Little Blue Heron 26 Aug–19 Sep (BMA) Single Cattle Egrets were at Hahn Marsh, Long Point, 18 Oct (S.Wilcox), the Blenheim S.T.P. 27 Oct+ (JKe, m.ob.), and Rondeau 28 Oct–1 Nov (SC, JTB); 7 were seen at Red Rock e. of Thunder Bay 2 Nov (JWi, GW, KJ) and 3 at Ottawa 5 Nov (MC). Unusual for Sault Ste Marie were the Green Heron 3 Sep and 10 Black-crowned Night-Herons on St. Mary's R during Sep (*vide* BKn). A Glossy Ibis was at the Alfred S.T.P. 17–18 Sep (JB) and a dark *Plegadis* ibis was at Leamington marina 30 Oct (BMo, LK). Single **Black Vultures** flew over Hamilton 24 Aug (RW) and Fisher's Glen 9 Oct (HMA) Turkey Vultures again set records in migration, with new high one-day counts of 960 at High Park, Toronto, and 980 at Cranberry Marsh, *Durham*, both 3 Oct (*vide* RBHS); the season total at Holiday Beach was 18,326 (*vide* AC).

Geese Through Raptors

Greater White-fronted Geese were scarce, with one at Whitby 7 Oct (JHe) and 2 at nearby Brooklin 10 Oct (GCa). **Ross's Geese**, however, showed evidence of their increasing population, with 2 ad. near Thunder Bay 18–21 Sep, both eventually shot by a hunter (*vide* NGE), one in Huntsville 24 Sep–2 Oct (MP, CJ, m.ob.), 4 w. of Thunder Bay 7 Oct (RCh), and an imm. in Ottawa 9 Oct (MT, BB, CL). There was a good Brant flight, with 150 s. over Cobourg harbor 15 Oct (MJCB), 198 at Kettle Pt. the same day (AHR), 120 at Toronto 16 Oct (PSS), and 110 over Ajax 17 Oct (JF); the 7 Brant at Leamington 17–25 Oct were rare for the Pelee area (GB et al.). The 2 Trumpeter Swans w. of Ft. Frances 11 Sep and 3 Oct (DHE, KM) were likely from the Minnesota re-introduction program.

A male Eurasian Wigeon remained on Wolfe I., L. Ontario, 28 Sep–27 Oct (RSa, ES et al.). A

rare breeder in the province, a female Canvasback with 2 large young was on a nest on the Leslie St. Spit, Toronto, 3 Aug (RBHS). Waterfowl numbers at the e. end of L. Ontario were considered weaker than in the last few years, even though peak counts in the Kingston area included 5130 Ring-necked Ducks 7 Nov, 65,000 Greater Scaup 5 Nov, and 32,000 Lesser Scaup 5 Nov (KFN, *vide* RDW). South of their usual breeding range were 3 broods of Lesser Scaup at the Wawa S.T.P. 21–22 Aug (NGE). King Eiders appeared early and in good numbers, with a female at Hamilton 1 Aug–9 Sep (KML, m.ob.), an imm. male at Pt. Pelee 9 Nov (KML), a female providing a regional first at Bannister L., *Waterloo*, 12 Nov (JGu, WW), 2 females near the Toronto Is. 13 Nov (BY), 6 off Van Wagner's Beach, Hamilton, 16 Nov (DM), an imm. male at Cobourg 16–30 Nov+ (MJCB, m.ob.), and another imm. at Kettle Pt. 22–25 Nov (AHR, m.ob.). Hamilton had a female **Common Eider** 18 Nov (KML). A female Harlequin Duck visited Presqu'île P.P. 1 Oct (BCa); 2 imm. males were in Cobourg harbor 26 Oct (MG) and then in nearby Port Hope 27–28 Oct (LH, MJCB), 2 females were in Toronto 5 Nov (AA), and a female was seen by many above Niagara Falls 23–26 Nov. The flock of 270 male Black Scoters at Shirley's Bay 15 Oct was unusual for the Ottawa area (BB et al.). Vast numbers of Long-tailed Ducks, totaling 66,000 birds, were off the Leslie St. Spit 5 Nov (GCo et al.) On the Ottawa R., a male Barrow's Goldeneye frequented the Remic Rapids 4–30 Nov (BL, m.ob.), but a female at Des Chênes Rapids was seen 4 Nov only (BL). A male Ruddy Duck at Emo 4 Aug was the first for *Rainy River* in several years (DHE, KM).

The 73 Bald Eagles at the Atikokan dump in mid-Nov furnished the highest ever count for this location (DHE). Seaciff tallied an unusually high 83 Red-shouldered Hawks 29 Oct (FJU). Broad-winged Hawk migration was excellent at several sites, with a record one-day 10,399 at High Park, Toronto, 15 Sep (*vide* RBHS) and a record season total 103,796 at Hawk Cliff on L. Erie (*vide* SRe); however, Broad-wingeds seemingly then took a more northerly route rather than following the L. Erie shoreline, as Holiday Beach saw relatively few while record numbers appeared on the n. shore of L. Michigan (*vide* AC) In Algonquin P.P., record-late Broad-winged Hawks were singles seen 2 and 6 Oct (MR). Fall **Swainson's Hawks** continue their increase, with one at L.P.B.O. 13 Sep (MSc, TM et al.), a juv. at High Park 16 Sep (DP), an ad. at Richmond Hill 21 Sep (NM), and an ad. dark morph at Wheatley 24 Sep (GTH). The 527 Red-tailed Hawks tallied at Seaciff 29 Oct (FJU) represented a record high count for the site.

There was a strong movement of Golden Eagles, with at least 44 seen at the L. Ontario hawk-watches, a season total of 97 at Hawk Cliff (*vide* SRe), and a record one-day count of 35 at Holiday Beach 21 Oct, with a season total there of 103 (*vide* AC).

Rails Through Shorebirds

A cooperative Yellow Rail at Isaac L., Warton, was enjoyed by several observers 9 Oct (JWJ et al.). An injured imm. **Purple Gallinule** picked up from a Toronto street 22 Sep (BCu) and released in nearby Grenadier Pond the same day was not seen thereafter. Erieau had a peak 7500 American Coots 19 Nov (JTB et al.). Sandhill Cranes continue to explore new territory in s. Ontario: a group of 30 e. of Ottawa still present 11 Nov suggested probable breeding in nearby Mer Bleue Bog (BSc, CL, BB, MT), and 22 at Crane Lake w. of Lindsay 13 Nov (JKg, *vide* DSA) were in an inaccessible area long suspected of harboring a few breeding pairs.

Unusually late lingering shorebirds included an American Golden-Plover in Hamilton Harbor 26–29 Nov (DL, JO, RSt) and an American Avocet on Mission I., Thunder Bay, 5–18 Nov (NGE, m.ob.); in the s., an avocet was at Kettle Pt. 1 Aug (AHR), 4 were at Rondeau 27 Aug (BMA), and one was at L.P.B.O. 11 Sep (MVB). Only one Willet was reported, at Presqu'île P.P. 13–15 Sep (m.ob.). Good counts of Hudsonian Godwit included 13 at Ottawa Beach 2 Sep (TB) and 11 flying by Van Wagner's Beach 15 Oct (BSm, JC, JWa). A Marbled Godwit was at the Chippewa Landfill, Thunder Bay, 23 Aug (GW). A Sanderling at Rondeau 4 Sep (BMA) had been banded in Delaware Bay in spring 1998. Western Sandpiper migration bypassed Ontario this year, with only three reports of single birds: at Kettle Point 7 Aug (THa), L.P.B.O. 17–18 Aug (MVB, AME), and Leslie St. Spit, Toronto, 20 Aug (VH, HD). A late juv. Least Sandpiper was at Muddy Creek, Pt. Pelee, 24 Nov+ (AW et al.); also late was a White-rumped Sandpiper at Presqu'île P.P. 30 Nov (DSH). At Atikokan, 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers 4 Sep (DHE) were the first since 1996; among at least 21 Buff-breasteds in the s. were 4 near Alliston 4 Sep (GCo) and 5 at the Townsend S.T.P. 16 Sep (DGr). The young male **Ruff** at Cranberry Marsh, Whitby, from late July was last seen 8 Aug (m.ob.). A Red Phalarope at Embrun S.T.P. 3 Sep swam with a Red-necked Phalarope (BB, BL, CL); single Red Phalaropes were also on Amherst I. 8 Oct (RDW), the Ottawa River 4 Nov (BDL), and Van Wagner's Beach 6 Nov (BW).

Jaegers Through Terns

An imm. Pomarine Jaeger struggling in the surf

at Pinery P.P. 3 Aug (AHR) subsequently died and was found to have been suffering from botulism (*ROM); at nearby Pt. Edward another imm. Pomarine was flying with an imm. Parasitic Jaeger 11 Nov (BMA, m.ob.). As usual, Van Wagner's Beach at the w. end of L. Ontario recorded more Parasitics than any other location in the province, with at least 44 between 27 Aug and 22 Oct, together with 12 or more jaegers unidentified as to species (RZD et al.) Of great interest this fall, however, was the large number of Long-tailed Jaegers reported in the south, suggesting that birders' improving identification skills are more accurately estimating the relative abundance of the three jaeger species in passage on the Great Lakes, with Long-taileds almost certainly under-estimated until recently. The first Long-taileds of this fall appeared 27 Aug, with an imm. at Amherst I (VPM, JBi), a dark-morph juv. at Van Wagner's Beach (RZD et al.), and 2 juv. inland from L. Ontario at Grimsby S.T.P. (KML). Van Wagner's Beach had another 28 Aug (RCu, GSl), a juv. 2 Sep (RZD et al.), and 3 ad. 22 Sep (BW), Pt. Pelee's 7th was a juv. at the Tip 19 Sep (AW), and a single bird was at Long Point's Tip 30 Sep (MJH).

After high winds, a Laughing Gull was briefly seen at the Tip of Long Point 17 Sep (KEW), but Franklin's Gulls avoided s. Ontario this fall, with no reports. Only the 2nd for North Bay, a Little Gull was on L. Nipissing 26 Oct (DTa et al.); at least 3 frequented the Niagara R. 5 Nov+ (WDA, BP), and ≤25 lingered on East L., *Prince Edward*, to 28 Nov (AB, KK). An ad. Black-headed Gull was at Van Wagner's Beach 22 Sep (BW). An ad. at the Leamington marina 12–13 Nov (IP et al.) provided one of few fall records for the Pt. Pelee area; another was at Niagara-on-the-Lake 26 Nov (IML). The celebrated **Heermann's Gull** on the Toronto waterfront was last seen 16 Sep (*vide* RBHS). An ad. California Gull returned to the Niagara R. 12 Nov+ (JI). Notable numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls included 3 in Ottawa and 3 in Toronto during Oct–Nov (m.ob.), 3 at Breslau, *Waterloo* 12 Nov (JGu, WW), and at least 8 above the Falls on the Niagara R. 25 Nov (m.ob.). Single juv. Sabine's Gulls were at Pt. Pelee 7 & 19 Sep (AW, HON) and 1 Oct (AW, SP), Van Wagner's Beach had 3 juv. 10 Sep (BSm, JC, JWa), and there was one at Sarnia 8 Oct (BMA). At Niagara, 2 juv. Sabine's Gulls were easy to spot in the mist below the Falls and another juv. frequented the Whirlpool area 18 Nov+ (RTS, m.ob.). There were at least eight reports of single first-winter Black-legged Kittiwakes in the s., including 2 seen intermittently along the Niagara R. 5–29 Nov (WDA, BP, m.ob.). A late Common Tern was at Erieau

until 20 Nov (JTB, SC), and another was above the Falls at Niagara 23 Nov (LJ et al.). Record-high numbers of Caspian Terns in Toronto harbor peaked at 242 birds 24 Aug (JI). A late Black Tern 19–21 Oct (*vide* KEW) furnished only the 3rd Oct record for L.P.B.O.

Pigeons Through Thrashers

A Band-tailed Pigeon frequented a schoolyard feeder n. of Thunder Bay 6–16 Nov (JA, m.ob.), and a White-winged Dove was seen briefly in Scarborough 28 Aug (GCo, RCo). A late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was banded on Muggs I. 20 Oct (T B O.).

Single, pale *subarcticus* Great Horned Owls were reported from the Leslie St. Spit from 12 Nov+ (CSAM) and at Presqu'île P.P. 30 Nov (CGo, JGo). Snowy Owls appeared in many locations in late Oct and Nov, from Rainy River and Thunder Bay in the n. to Sarnia, Eriean, and Amherst I. Even forested Algonquin P.P. hosted one 4 Nov (CA), its 13th record; many of these owls were poorly nourished immatures. October also brought an unprecedented movement of Northern Hawk Owls, first noted with singles near Thunder Bay early in the month, accelerating with the discovery of 5 in clearcuts s. of Armstrong 21 Oct (TA, JHa, EH) accompanied by reports from *Cochrane* and Temagami. At least 9 individuals were found in the Sudbury area (*vide* JL), with the first at Cartier 16 Oct (CB), up to 6 could be seen in one day at Atikokan in Nov (*vide* DHE). The hawk owls continued to edge s. through Nov, with at least 17 reports from cen. and s. Ontario; many appeared to be in transit, but some stayed longer, notably one at Merrickville, s. of Ottawa (BCa, m.ob.). At least 15 Great Gray Owls were reported in *Rainy River* during Nov, very high numbers for the District (*vide* DHE), but unfortunately several were killed on the roads; at least 6 were in the s., the first at Killbear P.P., *Parry Sound* 26 Oct (CP). Boreal Owls staged an early invasion: 5 had been banded at T.C.B.O. by 19 Sep, with an unprecedented 16 banded by 10 Oct (*vide* NGE); in the s. one was found near Napanee 29 Sep (CGr), another was in Algonquin P.P. on the record-early date of 13 Oct (MSt), and one was in Frontenac P.P. 22 Oct (PJG) Northern Saw-whet Owls were also in good numbers, with 318 banded at T.C.B.O. by 10 Oct (*vide* NGE); one intrepid bird, banded at Pigeon L. near Peterborough on the evening of 21 Oct, was recaptured only 2-and-1/2 hours later 47 mi due s. at Port Britain (RE, EK).

Notable late migrants included a Common Nighthawk on Leslie St. Spit 14 Oct (CSAM, RTS), and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Algonquin P.P. 23 Oct (GTH). Unusually far s. for the time of year, a male Black-backed

Woodpecker was at Presqu'île P.P. 10 Sep (FH), and a female was seen there intermittently 7 Oct+ (FH, m.ob.); in the n. Thunder Cape saw good numbers of migrating Black-backed, perhaps moving s. because of the lack of forest burns in which to forage; last summer Ontario had its fewest forest fires since at least 1928, possibly the fewest ever (*vide* NGE).

An Alder Flycatcher was record-late by two weeks for Algonquin P.P. 20 Sep (MR). Algonquin also had its first-ever Say's Phoebe 22–25 Sep (DTb, AS, m.ob., ph.). A male **Vermilion Flycatcher**, only the 3rd for the province, was photographed at Holiday Beach 7 Nov (WK). Morven had a Western Kingbird 29–30 Sep (ST, AT). The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at McKellar I., Thunder Bay, 9–12 Nov (WZ) scavenged dead worms on a gravel roadway as snow started to fall. Late vireos at Pt. Pelee N.P. included a Blue-headed 17 Nov (FJU), a Philadelphia 8 Nov (KML, RLW), and a Red-eyed 9 Nov (RGP). The Common Raven harassing a Bald Eagle at Kettle Pt., L. Huron, 23 Sep was only the 3rd seen there in the past 30 years (AHR); there were at least 7 reports of single ravens migrating w. along the n. shore of L. Ontario 8 Oct–12 Nov (m.ob.). On 7 Oct, Pt. Pelee N.P. had record one-day estimates of 1200 Winter Wrens and 10,000 Golden-crowned Kinglets (FJU et al.). T.C.B.O. recorded 3 single Townsend's Solitaires this fall, but they seemed to be moving through without lingering, possibly due to the lack of Mountain Ash berries along the n. shore of L. Superior (*vide* NGE). Peak night flights of thrushes over Kingston were estimated to include 300 Gray-cheeked Thrushes 12–13 Sep and again 17–18 Sep (RDW), and 36,000 Swainson's thrushes 12–13 Sep (RDW). Rare and late for Algonquin P.P. was the Gray-cheeked Thrush heard before dawn 15 Oct (CM). A late Hermit Thrush was near Thunder Bay 18 Nov (JA). Single male Varied Thrushes were at a Parry Sound feeder 22–26 Nov (RCr, LC) and in Sault Ste. Marie 22–29 Nov (*vide* BKn). The 19 Northern Mockingbirds at Col. Sam Smith Park 23 Sep (GCo) were a record-high count for the Toronto area; another was n. to Manitoulin I. 23 Oct (CB), while a pair frequented shrubbery in downtown North Bay 20 Oct–10 Nov (DTa). The Sage Thrasher at Ft. Frances 30 Oct (RSi) was the 3rd for *Rainy River*.

Warblers Through Finches

Warbler migration was protracted, with good numbers of several species and several late lingerers. The 14 Orange-crowned Warblers on Mugg's I. 9 Oct set a new Toronto-area record for a single site (T.B.O.). A Yellow-throated Warbler visited feeders in Thunder Bay 28

Oct–25 Nov (JMK, m.ob.); another was videotaped at a Georgetown suet feeder 19–22 Nov (JKm, PK). Late Blackpoll Warblers were at Thunder Bay 4 Nov (TBFN) and Garden I., Kingston, 19 Nov (DVW). Hanlan's Pt., Toronto Is., produced 170 Bay-breasted Warblers, 100 American Redstarts, and 40 Wilson's Warblers 9 Sep (GCo et al.). The Prothonotary Warbler at Hillman Marsh 25 Sep (DJW) was record-late for the Pelee area. An injured Ovenbird frequented a London backyard feeder until the last week of Nov (EG). Kingston had a Yellow-breasted Chat 26 Sep (DC), only its 7th in fall

There were few stray sparrows. Algonquin P.P. registered its now-annual Le Conte's Sparrow near L. Opeongo 22 Sep (MR). The passage of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows across the s. was light. Pt. Pelee N.P. held an estimated 5000 White-throated Sparrows 7 Oct (FJU). A Harris's Sparrow visited feeders in Echo Bay, *Algoma*, to 15 Oct; another or the same bird adopted a feeder in Elliot Lake 19 Nov+ (*vide* BKn). In mid-Nov another was at a feeder at Marks L. w. of Thunder Bay (*vide* NGE). There were 4000 Snow Buntings on Wolfe I. 11 Nov (KFN).

Northern Cardinals exploring the n. included an imm. male at Thunder Cape late Oct (T.C.B.O.), 5 at Terrace Bay late Oct (GSh), one at Ft. Frances 31 Oct (RSi), one at Atikokan 2 Nov (DHE), a male at Neys Park 3 Nov (LN), and a male at Thunder Cape 10 Nov (T.C.B.O.). A singing male Dickcissel was n. of Port Hope 9 Aug (DGe, m.ob.) and a female or imm. male provided the 2nd record for Algonquin P.P. 27 Sep (CJ); the Blenheim landfill hosted a Dickcissel 5 Nov (KJB, JTB) and an ad. male briefly visited a Cobourg feeder 28 Nov (MJCB). There were scattered reports of Brewer's Blackbirds in the s., one at Kettle Pt. 8 Oct (AHR) and a male at Prince Edward Pt. 29 Oct (JHE, RDW); 8 Brewer's frequented a feeder at Marathon mid-Nov (KW). The 18 Western Meadowlarks at Chippewa, Thunder Bay, 4 Nov were the most ever seen there (BA et al.); a late bird was seen and heard calling at Thunder Cape 16 Nov (JA).

A flock of 12 Pine Grosbeaks at Hahn Marsh 29 Oct (SW) furnished only the 2nd Oct record for L.P.B.O., all the more remarkable because of the few reports elsewhere. Purple Finches reached the s. in mid-Oct, with a peak of 250 in Kingston 5 Nov (KFN); Pt. Pelee N.P. had higher numbers than in recent years, with 50 there 8 Nov (KML, RLW). In late Aug a family group of House Finches, including 3 young, visited a feeder in Ft. William, *Thunder Bay* (BA). The cones of the heavy White Spruce crop in Algonquin P.P. opened during the mild fall weather. White-winged Crossbills, regular in

small numbers in Aug, were scarce by late Sep (*vide* RT). Pine Siskins were common in Algonquin P.P. in Oct but decreased markedly during Nov (*vide* RT), presumably moving s., as the peak at Prince Edward Pt. was 70 on 18 Nov (KFN).

Corrigenda

From the spring report, the Cave Swallow was at Pittock L. 18–19 April, not 18–19 May (J. Holdsworth).

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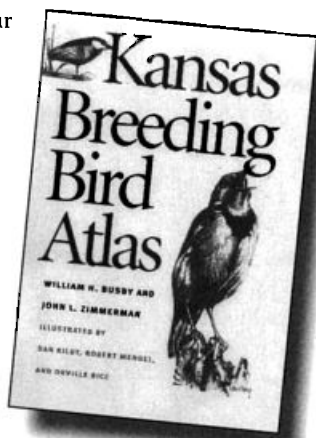
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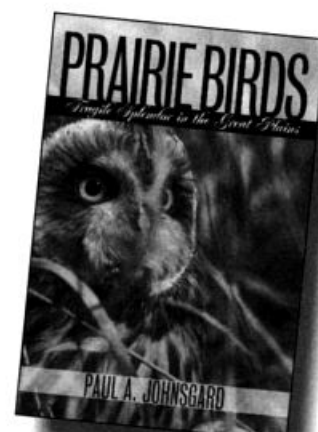
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