

## Notes on Summer Birds along the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence

**Abstract.** Observations on the birds of the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence were made from 3 July to 20 July 1970. Data which supplement previous knowledge are presented on eight of the 57 species recorded.

The bird life along the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence (reviewed by Godfrey, 1966; and Todd, 1963) is relatively well known.

We spent the period from 3 July to 20 July 1970 at Netagamu River (Harrington Harbour) studying Red-throated Loons (*Gavia stellata*). During this time we recorded all birds seen (57 species) and present the following list of those which supplement the data in Todd and in Godfrey.

### RING NECKED DUCK, *Aythya collaris*

On 4 July one male Ring-necked Duck was found loafing in a pond 2 km inland from the coast along the Netagamu River. The nearest breeding record is from Baie Johan Beetz about 250 km to the west (Cooch, 1955).

### SPARROW HAWK, *Falco sparverius*

The Sparrow Hawk has not been recorded along the North Shore east of the Moisie River near Seven Islands (Godfrey, 1966). On 4 July one Sparrow Hawk was seen in the treeless area 2 km inland from the coast along the Netagamu River. It was being chased by a Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*) which hit the Sparrow Hawk in mid-air. As the Sparrow Hawk flew off to the west the Pigeon Hawk flew back east and landed in a scrub spruce about 0.5 km away. The Pigeon Hawk may have been on territory as they breed in the area (Todd, 1963).

### LEAST SANDPIPER, *Erolia minutilla*

The Least Sandpiper breeds along the coast of Labrador through the Strait of Belle Isle west to Blanc Sablon (Gabrielson, 1952). It also breeds on Anticosti Island (Godfrey, 1966). We found Least Sandpipers on the Boat Islands (part of the St. Mary's Archipelago) on 13 July. One bird hovered on rapidly beating wings, calling loudly; it then gave several 'broken-wing' distraction displays. It evidently had a nest or young in

the area. Three other Least Sandpipers were seen on the islands.

### EASTERN KINGBIRD, *Tyrannus tyrannus*

The Eastern Kingbird has been reported eight times in the first half of June along the North Shore between Sept Iles and Wolf Bay (Todd, 1963). The only July record is by H. Lewis on the 14 July 1940 at Mutton Bay (Todd, 1963). We recorded a single individual on the St. Mary's Islands on 6 July.

### OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER, *Nuttallornis borealis*

There are few summer records of the Olive-sided Flycatcher along the North Shore and none east of Kegaska (Todd, 1963). We recorded one at Netagamu River on 10 July. This is about 150 km east of Kegaska. The bird sang loudly all day but was not seen or heard before or after.

### TREE SWALLOW, *Iridoprocne bicolor*

Todd (1963) considered the Tree Swallow rare or absent as a breeder along the North Shore east of Natashquan. He suggested a lack of suitable nest trees may be the reason for this. In recent years residents of Netagamu River and Harrington Harbour have erected bird houses. Tree Swallows are now common breeders in these communities with 5-10 pairs in each place. Even on the barren rocks of the Cape Whittle light house Tree Swallows were nesting in a nest box. It is not known if they also use natural structures in this region.

### BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, *Mniotilta varia*

One Black-and-white Warbler was seen at the mouth of the Netagamu River on 4 July. There are only 3 June records along the North Shore east to St. Augustine (Todd, 1963). This species has not been recorded breeding east of Mingan (Godfrey, 1966).

### BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, *Molothrus ater*

The Brown-headed Cowbird breeds southwards from Havre St. Pierre which is 300 km west of Netagamu River (Godfrey, 1966). The only records along the North Shore east of Havre St. Pierre are August records of single birds at Harrington Harbour and Bradore Bay (Lewis, 1934, 1938). Cowbirds are now common at Netagamu River. They were seen daily about the settlement with at least 3 females and 2 males being present. According to local residents cowbirds first appeared about 5 years ago and are now the most



common birds in the spring. Our daily records would indicate probable breeding by this species.

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