

A PRELIMINARY LIST OF THE BIRDS OF LINCOLN AND WELLAND COUNTIES

By R. W. SHEPPARD, W. E. HURLBURT and G. H. DICKSON

(Concluded from page 140)

Wilsonia canadensis (Linnaeus). CANADA WARBLER. — This would appear to be a somewhat uncommon visitor, for we have only five spring records from Vineland and one or two from Niagara Falls but, owing to its habit of travelling through the lower growths and underbrush and the fact that on this account it might easily be overlooked, it is quite possible that it is a more regular migrant through this area than our records would indicate. Laing⁴³ at Beamsville in 1918 observed a family party on September 8th.

Setophaga ruticilla (Linnaeus). AMERICAN REDSTART. — Although more numerous as a passing migrant, the Redstart is not uncommon as a summer resident in Welland County, where a few pairs may be found in nearly all of the larger wood-lots. Formerly nested on the wooded slopes at the back of Queen Victoria Park near Niagara Falls; but recent thinning of timber, building, and landscape alterations have now, apparently, caused these birds to desert this breeding area for larger and more secluded woodlands. As a breeding bird this warbler does not appear to be so frequently met with in Lincoln County but records of a few pairs seen a short distance south of Vineland during the summer of 1927 and 1932 would serve to indicate that it breeds, at least sparingly, in this locality. In the immediate vicinity of Vineland this bird is frequently observed during the spring migration season.

Passer domesticus domesticus (Linnaeus). ENGLISH SPARROW. — A very abundant resident throughout the area. In the rural sections this ubiquitous species does not appear to vary much in numbers from year to year but in the larger towns and cities some slight decrease in numbers has been noticed during the last ten years.

Dolichonyx oryzivorus (Linnaeus). BOBOLINK. — A fairly common summer resident throughout both counties, nesting wherever suitable meadow lands are to be found. Believed to be slowly increasing as a breeding bird in some parts of Welland County. In the autumn large flocks of this interesting bird are frequently seen in the Jordan marshes, near Vineland.

Sturnella magna magna (Linnaeus). EASTERN MEADOWLARK. — A common summer resident, usually arriving toward the end of March or early in April and departing in late September. A nest containing four Meadowlark's and one Cowbird's egg was found near the Niagara Glen by the senior author in May, 1934. Apparently, odd birds occasionally remain throughout the winter, for individuals of this species have been seen on one or two occasions during the mid-winter months.

Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus (Linnaeus). EASTERN RED-WING. — A very common summer resident, arriving in March, sometimes as early as the first week of that month. In both Welland and Lincoln Counties nearly every reed-bed, however small, affords a nesting site for at least one pair of these handsome birds. In the autumn they may be seen in both large and small flocks, frequenting the pastures and stubble fields and occasionally associating with the European Starling in a mixed flock, containing almost equal numbers of both species.

Icterus spurius (Linnaeus). ORCHARD ORIOLE. — The Orchard Oriole appears to be a regular but very local summer resident, having been observed for the past three years in succession in the Vineland area, where a few pairs are known to nest near the Horticultural Experiment Station. A pair were observed by G. J. Clout near Port Weller in Lincoln County on May 26, 1935.

Icterus galbula (Linnaeus). BALTIMORE ORIOLE. — This beautiful bird is a common summer resident throughout both counties hanging its cleverly-constructed nest from the tips of the drooping boughs of the taller elms and maples in the older residential sections of the cities of Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland, as well as in towns and villages and along the highways. Some of the fruit growers and gardeners of the Niagara district accuse this bird of attacking fruit and vegetables such as cherries and green peas but, while admitting that the growers may have some justification for their complaints, such observations as we have been able to make incline us to the belief that the comparatively small amount of damage occasioned to fruit and vegetables is far outweighed by the large numbers of noxious caterpillars destroyed.

43. *Can. Field-Nat.* 34: 25, 1920.

Euphagus carolinus (Muller). RUSTY BLACKBIRD. — In some years this species appears in fairly large flocks, both during the spring and autumn migration, but in other years only odd birds are seen. On October 9, 1933, numbers of these birds were seen by the senior author in the fields near Thorold, associating with Starlings, Red-winged Blackbirds, Grackles, and Cowbirds in an immense mixed flock, several thousand strong.

Quiscalus quiscula aeneus Ridgway. BRONZED GRACKLE. — The Bronzed Grackle is still a common summer resident, usually arriving in the district about the same time as the Robin; but we have noticed of late years, especially in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, where this species was formerly very abundant, a most remarkable and rapid decrease in the number of breeding birds. This decrease of nesting birds would appear to be a more or less local condition, for no such rapid decline in numbers appears to have taken place in Vineland. In the city of Niagara Falls Grackles sometimes congregate in large flocks in the late summer or early autumn and formerly caused much annoyance, as the Starlings do now, to the residents of certain streets, by roosting in great numbers in the tall shade trees and littering the sidewalks and lawns with their innumerable droppings. On September 18, 1930, a flock of Grackles, containing a hundred or more individuals, was observed near the Niagara Glen feeding voraciously on the acorns of a small group of tall chestnut oaks (*Quercus muhlenbergi*), the dropped fragments of acorn pattering down through the leaves like rain as the birds fed.

Molothrus ater ater (Boddart). EASTERN COWBIRD. — A common summer resident, usually arriving early in April. In September large flocks congregate in the marshes in company with Red-winged Blackbirds and European Starlings. Cowbirds are occasionally found in mid-winter associating with House Sparrows, and in this connection we have a January record from Vineland and a December record from Niagara Falls.

Piranga erythromelas Vieillot. SCARLET TANAGER. — A regular spring migrant, usually passing through the Niagara Falls area about the end of May but not common in that locality, although it is reported to breed on the Queenston heights. In the Vineland area this beautiful species is occasionally quite numerous during the spring migration. It has been observed on the return migration, at Niagara Falls, as late as October 9th.

Richmondia cardinalis cardinalis (Linnæus). EASTERN CARDINAL. — Although apparently extending its range and slowly moving into the area from the west, the Cardinal cannot be considered anything but a rare bird at the eastern end of the Niagara Peninsula. We have no records from the immediate vicinity of Niagara Falls, but it has been reported about seven times from the Vineland district during the past five years. G. J. Clout has recently found this bird breeding at Port Colborne in Welland County, and in this connection he has told us of seeing a pair with three young on the wing, on July 31, 1935 and of his discovery of another pair with a nest containing three nestling young, on August 1, 1935. The vicinity of the Lake Erie shore line of Welland County has apparently been a local stronghold of this interesting bird for a number of years, for members of the Buffalo Ornithological Society have frequently reported it from this area and as long ago as the year 1909 David E. Wheeler⁴⁴ recorded his observation of a pair on the Canadian shore of Lake Erie about six miles from the city of Buffalo.

Hedymeles ludovicianus (Linnæus). ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK. — A regular and quite common spring migrant in the Vineland district, usually arriving about the middle of May or earlier. Although it has been observed only on migration, it is suspected that some pairs may remain to breed in the more secluded areas of Lincoln County. Apparently a somewhat rare bird in the immediate vicinity of Niagara Falls for, with the exception of an odd bird or two seen on migration, we have few if any personal records of its occurrence at this point.

Passerina cyanea (Linnæus). INDIGO BUNTING. — Not an uncommon summer resident in the Vineland area, where it has been found to favour shrubby hillsides, and to show some partiality for nesting among raspberry bushes. Occasionally seen near Niagara Falls, but not commonly.

Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina (Cooper). EASTERN EVENING GROSBEEK. — A somewhat rare visitor to this district. In the winter of 1930 a flock of seven individuals spent about a month among some Manitoba maples at Vineland and in that same locality, during the latter part of 1933, the aviaries of Dr. W. E. Hurlburt, containing at the time some captive birds of this species, were visited by a male Grosbeak on November 3rd and by two females on December 1st. Otomar Reinecke⁴⁵ has reported the oc-

⁴⁴ *Bird-Lore*, 12: 80, 1910.

⁴⁵ *Oologist*, 28: 58-9, 1911, and 29: 355-6, 1912.

currence in winter of flocks of this species at Sherkston, Ridgeway and Niagara Falls between the years 1889 and 1911.

Carpodacus purpureus purpureus Gmelin. EASTERN PURPLE FINCH. — Occasionally seen during the spring months, both at Niagara Falls and at Vineland but it does not appear to be at all common in either locality. The Purple Finch has, on occasion, been observed at Vineland during winter and G. J. Clout has told us of his observation of a flock of about twenty near St. Catharines, on March 10, 1936.

Acanthis linaria linaria (Linnæus). COMMON REDPOLL. — A bird of sporadic occurrence. Large flocks have been occasionally observed, during the late winter and early spring months, at Niagara Falls and Fonthill in Welland County, while it has been reported on several occasions from Vineland and other Lincoln County points in midwinter. The lighter coloured, pale greyish birds occasionally encountered among the winter flocks of Redpolls in this area are possibly referable to the Hoary Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*, but in the absence of collected specimens we are unable to produce any definite evidence to this effect.

Spinus pinus pinus (Wilson). NORTHERN PINE SISKIN. — An irregular visitor, it has been observed only in winter time at Niagara Falls but at Vineland five separate observations of this little finch have been made during the months of April and May. At that time it appeared to resemble the Goldfinch in its habits, inasmuch as it frequented lawns and fed upon the seeds of Dandelion, etc.

Spinus tristis tristis (Linnæus) EASTERN GOLDFINCH. — A very common summer resident throughout both counties, usually becoming exceedingly abundant in September and early October, when the family parties commence to wander over the country side. This beautiful little bird appears to be subject to a fluctuation in numbers or a periodicity, which makes it noticeably abundant in some years and comparatively scarce in others. Following several years of apparent normality it was present in most unusual quantities in this district during the years 1931 and 1932. We are of the opinion that a careful study of the Goldfinch, with frequent census taking in a given area over a number of years, combined with observations on weed conditions and the influence of weather on seed formation, would produce some very interesting results and would probably help very materially toward an explanation of the apparent fluctuation in the numbers of this exceedingly useful and very charming little bird.

Loxia curvirostra pusilla Gloger. RED CROSS-BILL. — A scarce winter visitor. The latest record for the Vineland area was in March, 1932, when a flock of fourteen spent about a week in that vicinity. Seven, or exactly half of the birds in this flock, were in the red plumage and the other seven were green. They were quite tame and spent a great deal of time eating the seeds out of some old sunflower heads which had been left standing.

Pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus (Linnæus). RED-EYED TOWHEE. — Seen regularly as a spring migrant in the Vineland district and occasionally at Niagara Falls. This bird is also found somewhat sparingly during the summer months as a nesting species within the more heavily wooded sections of the two counties. G. J. Clout found a nest with four nestling young near St. Catharines on June 1, 1935, and fifteen or more years ago Laing⁴⁶ wrote of it as breeding locally near Beamsville.

Passerculus sandwichensis savanna (Wilson). EASTERN SAVANNAH SPARROW. — A common summer resident of the pasture fields, usually arriving about the middle of April or earlier.

Ammodramus savannarum australis Maynard. EASTERN GRASSHOPPER SPARROW. — Apparently a somewhat uncommon species at the eastern end of the Niagara Peninsula. This small and unobtrusive sparrow was observed by the senior author in Welland County on one or two occasions during June, 1934, and more recently, in the summer of 1935, it has been found to occur sparingly in the rough pastures near Warner in Lincoln County.

Passerherbulus henslowi henslowi (Audubon). WESTERN HENSLOW'S SPARROW. — We have no personal records of this sparrow within the area of Lincoln and Welland Counties but it is perhaps of special interest to mention here J. Murray Speir's⁴⁷ recent report of its occurrence at Lowbanks on the Welland and Haldimand County borders.

Poëcetes gramineus gramineus (Gmelin). EASTERN VESPER SPARROW. — A very common summer bird of the roadside and pastures. Sometimes abundant, especially in the southern part of Welland County, where it often remains until as late as the middle of October.

Junco hyemalis hyemalis (Linnæus). SLATE-COLOURED JUNCO. — A common and regular winter visitor, usually appearing late in October or early in November, although, occasionally, as early as September. In some seasons only comparatively few spend the entire winter in

46. *Can. Field-Nat.* 34: 24, 1920.

47. *Can. Field-Nat.* 47: 35, 1933.

this district but when this happens they are frequently almost abundant during the month of April, as the birds that went farther south begin to drift northward again. The Junco is a frequent visitor to gardens and vacant lots in and around the city of Niagara Falls during the late autumn and early spring months.

Spizella arborea arborea (Wilson). EASTERN TREE SPARROW. — This is a common winter bird throughout both counties. Usually to be found at the edge of old rough pastures, gardens, orchards, graperies, or wherever tall weed growths are to be found in combination with some adjacent shelter, such as evergreen wind-breaks or small patches of wooded land.

Spizella passerina passerina (Bechstein). EASTERN CHIPPING SPARROW. — This familiar little sparrow is a very common summer resident throughout the area, generally arriving during the latter part of April and occasionally lingering until October.

Spizella pusilla pusilla (Wilson). EASTERN FIELD SPARROW. — A common but somewhat local summer resident favouring hillsides and rough pasture lands chiefly in the southern or higher parts of Lincoln County. We have no personal records from Welland County, but it is presumed to be present there in suitable localities.

Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys (Forster). WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. — This handsome sparrow is quite commonly observed during both spring and autumn migration periods. At Vineland it would appear to be most frequently noted in the spring but in the vicinity of Niagara Falls we have more often observed this bird during the autumn movement, about the end of September or early in October.

Zonotrichia albicollis (Gmelin). WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. — A common spring and autumn migrant, both at Vineland and at Niagara Falls. Here, in this southern part of Ontario, we are not often favoured with the truly beautiful song of this bird but on September 30, 1932, we were privileged to hear a chorus of several, singing in a large brush-covered depression, containing thorn trees and high weeds, close to the outskirts of the city of Niagara Falls. These particular birds were associating and appeared to be travelling in company with a few White-crowned Sparrows, one of which was also singing within a few yards of the observer, one or more Juncos, a number of Robins, and some unidentified warblers.

Passerella iliaca iliaca (Merrem). EASTERN FOX SPARROW. — This large, handsome sparrow

is not uncommon in the vicinity of Vineland during the spring migration season. Here it is usually to be seen soon after the middle of April and at that time it may quite frequently be found scratching among dead leaves on the Horticultural Experiment Station grounds. We have one winter record, from Vineland, of a single example observed on January 31, 1928. This bird was seen in an apple orchard, in company with Tree Sparrows but pursuing its own method of feeding by scratching vigorously at the foot of the trees.

Melospiza georgiana (Latham). SWAMP SPARROW. — We have very few definite records of this bird but it has been seen on one or two occasions in the vicinity of Vineland and at least once near Niagara Falls. More field work and closer observations of the marshy areas would in all probability reveal this bird as a species which is much less rare than our few personal records would tend to indicate.

Melospiza melodia melodia (Wilson). EASTERN SONG SPARROW. — This is undoubtedly the commonest and most widely distributed native sparrow within the two counties. It is present throughout the year, for it is quite frequently seen in sheltered spots during the winter months, especially in the vicinity of water, but, commencing early in March, the small numbers of the overwintering birds are greatly augmented by a very considerable influx of migrants from the south.

Calcarius lapponicus lapponicus (Linnæus). LAPLAND LONGSPUR. — A somewhat rare visitor, chiefly of the late winter or early spring months. Our few notes on this species record only the infrequent occurrence of odd birds at Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, and Vineland, but from the latter point Douglas Ross has given us a report of his observation on March 17, 1934, of a large flock of Lapland Longspurs which he estimated to contain from 400 to 500 birds. There is an interesting autumn record by Laing⁴⁸ of three seen passing overhead at Beamsville in Lincoln County on November 9, 1918.

Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis (Linnæus). EASTERN SNOW BUNTING. — The Snowflake, as this bird is frequently called, is an irregular but sometimes abundant winter visitor to both Lincoln and Welland Counties. Few winters go by without at least a few of these buntings being seen; but, in general, it is only when the weather is severe and the snow quite deep that we are favoured by the visit of a really large flock of these beautiful birds from the north.

48. *Can. Field-Nat.* 34: 24, 1920.



Sheppard, R. W., Hurlburt, W. E., and Dickson, Geo. H. 1936. "A Preliminary List of the Birds of Lincoln and Welland Counties, Ontario." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 50(9), 149–152. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.339936>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/89296>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.339936>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/339936>

Holding Institution

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Sponsored by

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.