BIRDS OF A FEATHER by Marg Hendrick

The birding year the culminates in Christmas Audubon Counts, Bird and members of the North Leeds Birdwatchers(NLB) participated in the two which were held locally. Christmas take place counts within 7 1/2 mile radius circles, and participants are required to follow strict rules. The results are published in the birders 'Bible" Birds". "American The Westport count produced 58 species which were among Common Locn, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Belted Merlin, Kingfisher, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Bohemian Kinglet, Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, Lapland Longspur, Red Crossbill and Hoary Redpoll.

A total of 48 species were found on the Rideau Ferry count, which is organized by the Rideau Valley Naturalists. Field Some of the highlights were Canada Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Bald Eagle, Great Barred, Horned, Short-eared and Saw-whet Owls, and Bohemian Waxwings.

The Hummingbird, which somehow found its way to the Bennett feeder in Battersea, was mentioned in my This column. last "wrong little way Carrigan", which should not even be here during the summer, found approximately itself 3000 miles from its fall destination. The worked Bennets valiantly to provide the bird with food. They used heaters to keep the syrup in a liquid state and supplemented it with proteins provided by Kit Chubb of the Auian Care and Research Foundation.

We can only surmise that as far as the bird was concerned it had completed and the migration, it would only way Mexican reach its grounds wintering would be by human intervention. Experts agreed that netting the tiny creature would risky. too he

Eventually, a special suitable cage trapping hummingbirds constructed. was Then on Dec. 19 persons the required (with easily permits) succeeded in enticing the bird into the cage. The plan was to have it rest over in a suitable spot in Ottawa, then to fly it to its southern wintering grounds. However, good intentions notwithstandi the bird refused to eat and died 2 days later. In spite of the sad ending to this story, Mr. & Mrs. Bennett deserve nothing but praise for all their efforts which enabled the hummingbird to survive at their feeder so late in the season.

On Nov. 20 Millie Mott saw 3 large flocks of Canada Geese near Seeley's Bay. Some were also seen by Bob Wanless, Glynn Guthrie and Leorere Wayes in Dec. latest report of geese came from Leorene who saw a flock near Brockville early in Jan.

In late Nov. and early Northern Dec. Cardinals appeared at the Cutfield, Mess, Sides, Hendrick and Burt feeders. Gladys Burt appeared to be favoured - with 2 pairs coming to hers!

Rufous Margaret Keith had a Cardina Wren visiting counted her feeding station Westport on Nov. 28, 29, and 30. Later, on Jan. 3, that lucky Gladys Burt had a Carolina Wren turn up in her Basement!

It now frequents her feeder. This species, rare in this area, is smaller than a House Wren, has a white eye line, rufous back and buffy underparts.

On Nov. 28 Annette Mess had a group of Gray Partridge walk through her yard. This species, which prefers open farmland similar habitat, seems to be difficult to find in this area. Flocks of Snow Buntings which also prefer an open situation were seen by John Goodman and Don McNicholls. Pat McManus had a puzzling bird at his feeder which turned out to be a Lapland Longspur. In its winter plumage this species resembles a sparrow.

It too likes open country and discovered frequently travelling with Snow Buntings.

On her way to join the Nov. 25 NLB field trip, Winona Barker a Northern spotted Shrike. Shrikes, in the absence of mice, prey on small birds such as buntings and sometimes show up at feeders looking for a bird meal. On the above mentioned field trip, members NLB the had difficulty identifying hard to see duck on Big Rideau Lake. They finally realized they were locking at a Gadwall.

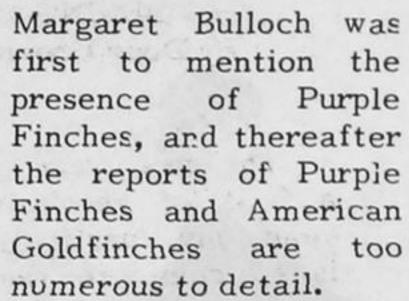
Huge flocks Mergansens Common Bob seen by were whilst Wanless water was open on Lake. Ellen Sand Bonvill saw a flock of mergansens flying NE, perhaps in search of more open water in which to fish.

A late Osprey, which also likes to "fish", seen by Dan Nicholls near Morton on Nov. 27.

On nov. 30 Colin Cope Eleanor and had a Common Grackle at their feeder and also saw Bufflehead on Wolf Lake. Their Red-bellied regular Woodpecker "high-tailed" it and so missed being on the count. However, it redeemed itself by returning on Jan. 11. Harrison Peters still has a pair Red-bellied coming Woodpeckers to his feeder along with Mourning Doves a host of other birds that feed there!

Annette Mess was to find a fortunate Blackbird Brewers' crib near at a corn her home. This species undergoing been expansion. a range The male is all black with a whitish eye. In good light it shows reflections purplish on its head and greenish reflections on its body. Its size is that of a largish Red-winged Blackbird.

John Goodman has had Pine Siskins at his feeder. Marjorie Jackson and Harrison House have Peters Finches at theirs and the Hendrick feeder still entertaining Juncos. Dark-eyed



One last interesting observation feeder - a muskrat was seen beneath Dick and Mollie Usshen's feeder.

Pauline Hockey and Pat McManus were rewarded by seeing 4 Bald Eagles while birding near Big Rideau Eagles seem Lake. to be more prevalent now that DDT is not problem same the it once was.

Thanks to directions from Pep Burt, the NLB saw a Great Blue Heron on their Jan. 13 field trip. Even more astonishing were the large numbers of bull frog tadpoles seen swimming near the surface of holes in the ice of a nearby beaver pond. observed in one of the water holes was a live Red Salamander, which sported a large cancer-like growth on its body. The following day Harrison discovered Peters another Great Blue Heron near Chantry!

If I do not include the story of Hamlet, our daughter's budgie, I will be a dead duck! In honour of our visit on Christmas Eve, he laid an egg in the below see-catcher his cage! He is now known as Hamletta!

This should lighten your spirits and make "think spring" you Cutfield -Bill saw American Robins near his home on Jan. Moreover, your trip to the South Crosby dump could be cheery, for Ozzie White reports that the little band of wintering robins are still there.

The number to call with your sightings is 359-5178. Until next month

GOOD BIRDING



