



The New Brunswick Naturalist has fallen behind schedule and we ask your forgiveness. We hope to be back to normal soon.

#### MAMMALS

Few interesting notes are available on mammals, this spring. Mrs. Marjorie A.E. Gray reports seeing four bats flying at Woodstock on April 22. This is probably a fairly normal date for early bat activity in New Brunswick, although very little information is available.

A woman who does not want her name mentioned described an animal seen April 30 on the outskirts of East Saint John which she believed was a Cougar or Eastern Panther. It was larger than her German shepherd dog, brownish in colour, and had a long tail. When first seen it was in a tree from which it came down and ran. Returning a few hours later, she and her husband could not find any tracks.

An early Moose calf, very young, was seen with its mother on Caledonia Mountain, Albert County on May 20 (Majkas & Christie).

#### BIRDS

Spring migration of birds was fairly normal this year. There were some unusual species and numbers but no more than usual. The timing of arrivals was about average, overall. Our account will touch mainly the highlights reported.

A particularly early Pied-billed Grebe was found alive on a road near Geary March 22 and taken to the S.P.C.A. in Fredericton (fide Peter Pearce). Later, but still quite early, was one at Chance Harbour March 28 (Cecil Johnston & Jim Wilson). April 10-20 is a more usual period for first reports.

Our first report of Double-crested Cormorants was April 11 when 74 were seen between Pt. Lepreau and Fairhaven on a Saint John Naturalists' Club (SJNC) field trip. The Great Cormorant, our winter species, was present also, with 43 seen in the same area. On the North Shore Double-crests were reported April 12 at Dalhousie (16) and Benjamin River (16) by Alan Madden. Inland, Nettie Moore saw 6 at Fredericton Apr. 18 and Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Moore saw 87 near Burton the next day. One Great Cormorant was seen in the Jemseg area by Kermodé Parr Apr. 20. It is seldom recorded away from the coast.

Several interesting heron reports are at hand. Foremost is a Louisiana Heron found at East Saint John by Roy Forrester on April 13. It had been dead a few days, apparently after a collision with hydro lines. Preserved as a study skin in the Museum collection it is the third specimen and the fourth record of this southern

heron in the province. Two of the previous records were also in April, the third in August. Next in line is a Snowy Egret seen by Paul Germain on May 10 at Cap Pele, Westmorland County. Three adult Little Blue Herons were reported: 1 at Waterside April 26 (Christie and Majkas), 1 at St. Martins April 30 (Joyce Golden & Mary Ross) and 1 at Little Dipper Harbour May 16 (Mrs. D. Marshall). It is becoming more frequent in spring and like the following species might nest in New Brunswick in a few years time.

Again a few Cattle Egrets have appeared. The first were two seen near McGowans Corner by Peter Pearce on May 12. They were observed by several persons for several days after. One (of the same?) was seen about ten miles east, at Lower Jemseg on May 19 (Pearce & Parr). Another Cattle Egret was seen by Mrs. Clyde Steeves at Edgetts Landing, Albert County, May 13-14. Probably the same bird was seen at Lower Cape May 16-21 (Doug Whitman et al). Of our other herons, Great Blues were back March 29 at Little Dipper Harbour (Christie & Majkas) and Saint John West (Johnston), Green Heron May 8 at Memramcook (Reid McManus) and May 17 near Waterside (Pearce & Richard Whitman), Am. Bittern April 11 at Memramcook (McManus). No night herons were reported.

A few Canada Geese were heard overhead at Oak Point on March 18 (vide Stanley Gorham), one day after the traditional St. Patrick's Day arrival. 87 were seen on the Shepody River marshes on the 19th (Majkas). As the population of Snow Geese increases the likelihood of finding them in New Brunswick, east of the main migration route, also increases. Several were reported this spring: 6 at Prince of Wales, St. John County March 20 (Jim Dryden); 14 at Hopewell Hill, Albert County March 20 (Mary Majka); 3 at Island View, York County Apr. 29 (Parr); 3 at Lower Cambridge, Queens County May 3 (Nettie Moore); 1 at Bloomfield, Kings County May 11-13 (E.M. Yorke, Christie, Johnston & Wilson).

Prior to this year we had only three provincial records of the Common Teal, the Eurasian species which closely resembles our Green-winged Teal. This spring, Cecil Johnston noted one male in a flock of Green-winged Teal at Saints' Rest Marsh, Saint John West. On the 31st, two males were seen there (Johnston, Wilson and David Smith). Later, on May 2 and 4 Peter Pearce and others saw one at Lower Sheffield. It was accompanied by a female teal but it is impossible to distinguish females of the two species. Identification of the Common Teal is further complicated by the fact that due to moulting the males usually can be distinguished only between late November and June. An early Blue-winged Teal was at Jolicure, Westmorland County April 8 (Al Smith).

Two Shovelers were seen at Memramcook Apr. 27 (McManus) and a pair May 2 at Germantown, Albert County (Dr. W. Majka and Christie) where 2 pairs were seen May 23 (SJM). Two male Redheads were reported Apr. 25 at Sheffield (Parr). Another rare duck, the Harlequin, was reported from Pt. Lepreau, 2 on Apr. 19 (Wilson and Johnston).

Sea ducks begin migrating early as evidenced by 200 Common Eider flying over Memramcook March 1 (McManus). The Memramcook valley is one route used by ducks passing from the Bay of Fundy to Northumberland Strait. A male eider which obviously had been migrating overland was found on the highway at Martinon, Saint John, early on the morning of March 17 (Echstrom). Unfavorable weather may have grounded it during the night. Released on the Bay later in the day, it showed no ill effects from its misadventure. Alan Madden reports large numbers of migrant Surf Scoters on the Bay of Chaleur. Apr. 26 he saw 8400 at Point-la-Nim, and on May 3, 20,000 between Campbellton and Dalhousie.



A good number and variety of hawks were reported during the spring. Only the highlights can be mentioned now. A Peregrine Falcon, a species now very rare in New Brunswick, was reported March 1 at Memramcook (McManus). One Osprey arrived unusually early, March 8 at Jemseg (Parr). The next report we have is April 12 at Caledonia Mountain (Dr. M. Hajka).

The Golden Eagle was not reported in New Brunswick during the twenty-year period, 1949-1969. Last spring (Apr. 4, 1969) 2 adults were seen flying over Fredericton (Pearce et al). Last fall (Nov. 10, 1969) one was caught in a trap at Waukiagen Lake, near McAdam (identified and reported by Walter Sangster). Unfortunately that bird was destroyed. This spring we have a third report. Nettie Moore and Willa MacCoubrey watched two circling over Chance Harbour on April 30. Miss Moore has submitted full details of their sighting and of the individual she concentrated on, which was in immature plumage. Are three reports in just over a year after a twenty year void, an indication of things to come? Only time will tell.

Amongst shorebird observations three are of special interest. Cecil Johnston reports a Stilt Sandpiper, in breeding plumage, at Saint John West May 12. This is the first spring migration report of this species which is very rare here in fall. Most of them travel north and south through the central portion of the continent. Checks in "The Birds of Nova Scotia" and "Maine Birds" reveals no spring records there either. The Upland Plover has been recorded once or twice a year recently. This spring 4 were at Maugerville May 2 (Pearce). Three Northern Phalaropes (2 females, 1 male) were at Lower Jemseg May 19 (Pearce et al), the first found inland during spring.

Cape Tormentine is one of the best areas in the province to see Iceland Gulls and three (immatures) were still there as late as May 29 (Christie). Our other "white gull" the Glaucous was seen last by Hilaire Chiasson at Gloucester County. As reported in the last number, some gulls spent the winter below Mactaquac dam, but in most inland areas the first gull is a sign of spring. One Herring Gull had moved upriver as far as Bath by March 19 (May Armand).

An unusually early Tree Swallow appeared at Browns Flat April 1 (Stan Gorham). The next date, a normal one, was April 14 when 5 were seen in the Jemseg area (Melvin Moore). Other April swallows were Barn Swallows Apr. 26 at Deer Island (Johnston) and Chance Harbour (Janice Dexter) and Purple Martins Apr. 27 at Irishtown (Charles McEwen).

A few Brown Thrashers were reported, the first being one Apr. 29 at Green Head, Saint John (Wilfred Wood), a pair May 10 and later at Saint John West (Wilson et al), and one May 10 at Penniac, where they nested in 1969 (Walter Wade). No Mockingbirds were reported in April or May.

The last reports of the winter's small incursion of Bohemian Waxwings were at Riverview (13 on March 18, 6 March 19, D. Whitman) and Hopewell Hill, Albert County (8 on Apr. 6, Mary Hajka).

A Loggerhead Shrike, rare here, was seen and heard singing at Turtle Creek April 19 (D. Whitman). This species nests very rarely in the province.

A few warblers were seen in April, e.g. 1 Palm Warbler at Deer Island Apr. 26 (Johnston), 1 Yellowthroat at Saint John West Apr. 26 (Dexter), 1 Myrtle Warbler at Saint John (Mrs. Marshall) and 20 at Beaumont, Westmorland County (McManus) on Apr. 27. Most other warblers were seen first on either May 3 or May 13. The data is too numerous to quote in full but arrivals were reported May 3 at Turtle Creek (D. Whitman), Hammond River (Wilson & Johnston), Saint John (D. Smith) and Jemseg (Parr) and May 13 at Upper Woodstock (Stephen Homer), Torryburn, St. John County (Greta Clark), Bath (Arnand), Riverview (D. Whitman) and Fredericton (N. Moore).

The first big arrivals of Robins, and the early blackbirds and sparrows entered the province March 27-31. A few were recorded as early as March 19-20. Thousands of Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds were moving north along the east side of Deer Island on April 11, (SJNC). No good estimate of the total numbers was made.

A major influx of Scarlet Tanagers was recorded in late May from many areas (St. Andrews, Saint John, St. Martins, Moncton, Fredericton, Woodstock, Newcastle and points between). The first, a male was seen May 13 at Gondola Point (Robt. Hulsman & Robt. Percival), but most reports were from May 23 on. Some birds visited feeders, others were found dead. This may indicate poor feeding conditions in the wild or, more likely, arrival of birds in a weakened condition. Several found dead have not yet been examined for cause of death. Probably connected with this tanager influx is the report of a new bird for New Brunswick, a Western Tanager. A male was seen at Westfield May 27 by Roy Whitehead and Willard Monteith. The bird was seen well and described perfectly by Mr. Whitehead.

A male Indigo Bunting visited the feeder of Mrs. R.J. Collins at Long Reach, Kings County from April 4 to 8. The bird was very dishevelled when first seen and spent almost all the time at the feeder. It may have been carried here by an air-stream, a high level passage of tropical air which sometimes carries birds far north of their usual location during April.

We have had several reports of Rufous-sided Towhees this spring: male at Pt. Lepreau Apr. 27 (Christie), female at Saint John West May 3 (Johnston), male there May 9 (Dexter), 1 at Moncton May 14 (Germain), male at Fundy National Park May 22 (Peter Vass), and 2 pairs at Cummings Cove, Deer Island during May (Mildred Jones). All observers should keep a close watch for the possibility of nesting in New Brunswick.

#### AMPHIBIANS

Cool weather in April retarded the appearance of breeding amphibians slightly. Stanley Gorham found the first Spotted Salamanders in a ditch at Oak Pt. on April 12, despite some ice on the water. It was at least a week later before a larger number was seen. One Wood Frog was out but not calling at Oak Pt. Apr. 20 (Gorham). The first Spring Peepers were calling at South Bay Apr. 26 (Mrs. C. Laskey) and at Browns Flat (Gorham) and Musquash (Christie) the next day. One Green Frog was also seen at Browns Flat Apr. 27 (Gorham). A Leopard Frog and Am. Toad were seen by Robt. Squires and a Mink Frog at Bairdsville, Victoria County on May 10 (W.A. Squires).

Stan Gorham has found most amphibians scarce in the Browns-Flat-Oak Point area this spring compared with his observations there for several years. The deep frost penetration in January might have effected hibernating amphibians, as also



the severe erosion along streams and ditches during the February "flood." Christopher Majka and Bob Squires have found amphibians in apparently normal numbers in Albert County and in western York County, respectively. (Majka counted 46 Spotted Salamanders in a ditch at Osborne Corner on May 3). Possibly the winter weather was less severe in these areas.

#### FLORA

Few correspondents have reported on wildflowers. Early blooms reported were Coltsfoot Apr. 6 at Saint John, Dandelion Apr. 29 at Saint John and Skunk Cabbage Apr. 29 at Hammond River (Christie). Melvin Moore found the following blooming late in April, somewhere in central New Brunswick: Dogtooth Violet (Trout Lily), Bloodroot, Dutchman's-breeches and Mayflower (Trailing Arbutus). At Woodstock Mrs. Marjorie Gray reported Red Trillium blooming May 13, Wood Anemone and Bellwort (Wild Oats) May 20, Sugar Maple May 27 and Butternut May 28. Dr. Squires found Yellow Violets blooming at Andover May 10. One of the beautiful shows of colour in the New Brunswick countryside is the blooming of the Shadbush or Bilberry in May, the white petals contrasting nicely with copper-coloured or deep green leaves. Between Albert County and Saint John the first ones were blooming May 19. The following day the full show was on.

#### INFORMATION WANTED

Scarlet Tanager - In connection with the tanager influx this spring we would like to obtain the data on all tanager sightings in May and June - where, when and how many - Indicate, if possible, the sex of the birds seen and information, where applicable, concerning birds found dead or visiting feeders. The data is desired in an effort to determine when and how most of the birds arrived and why some died. Observations already reported need not be sent in again.

Peregrine Falcon, Osprey and Bald Eagle - Due to general declines noted in the populations of the preceding three species we would like to determine their present status in New Brunswick. Information on these birds in the province will be welcomed, particularly any data on nesting and its success or failure. A forthcoming issue of New Brunswick Naturalist will feature these species.

Coloured Shorebirds - A study of shorebird migration routes will include banding and colouring the underparts of shorebirds in the Magdalen Islands and Sable Island. Please report all details concerning such shorebirds, including the colour of the belly.

Colour-banded Terns - A massive banding program is underway along the Atlantic coast, so watch terns seen well and report any with coloured leg bands. Observe carefully as there are several different colour combinations.

Potential Nature Preserves - The International Biological Program is interested in locating excellent examples of different types of forest, marsh, dunes, etc. You are invited to suggest any fine examples of vegetation you think would be worthwhile nature preserves. Please indicate precisely where it is located so that a field investigator can locate it.