



Despite good intentions, this newsletter has fallen well behind its schedule again. The great amount of spring bird observations and a busy schedule of Breeding Bird Surveys and other demands have put us three months late. We shall endeavour to catch up soon. Observations from June and July should be submitted immediately, and from August and September soon.

MAMMALS

Enid Inch reports that Flying Squirrels built a nest in a pail hanging on the wall in a tourist cabin at Cambridge-Narrows. Mrs. Ernest Sypher was very surprised to find the nest and three young when cleaning on May 12. The mother stayed close by all the time and the next day they found that she had moved the babies out to other quarters. Miss Inch also reports that Gray Squirrels were very plentiful in that area this past winter, possibly because the deep snow had forced them near homes in search of food.

Chris Majka at sea in the mouth of the Bay of Fundy saw a Blackfish (or Pilot Whale) May 20.

An odd albino reported was a pure white Muskrat trapped at the Westcock marsh, near Sackville, on Apr.22 (*fide* Al Smith).

BIRDS

Such a great number of interesting bird observations have been submitted that it becomes difficult to choose which ones to discuss. As so often happens, during migration, a lot of unusual birds turned up in unexpected places demanding coverage. As a result, treatment of the migration of common species will be less than ideal.

Last year Father Jean-Paul Lebel moved from Jacquet River to Dalhousie, enabling him to make frequent checks on the tidal lagoon and freshwater marshes at the mouth of the nearby Eel River. Although known as a very attractive area for birds, never before has it received such regular scrutiny. Several species not previously reported from northern New Brunswick have been discovered. The Eel River Bar - Eel River Crossing area is undoubtedly best in that part of the province for the study of most waterbirds. Watch for reports from there in the next three numbers of the New Brunswick Naturalist and judge for yourself.

A Pied-billed Grebe beat out last year's early bird by one day, being noted in the Shepody River at Albert Mar,21 (David Christie & the Majkas). Presumably the same one was seen again on the 27th.

Two Gannets seen off Cape Enrage on April 3 (Eric Tull, Paul Germain, Serge Pilote & David Galinat) provide our first record for Chignecto Bay. Hilaire Chiasson saw 15+ at Bathurst Apr.11 and single birds were seen at the head of the Baie de Chaleur at Charlo River May 2, Dalhousie May 4 and Eel River Bar May 5 (Lebel). They are reported regularly along the east coast during migration when Peter Pearce saw perhaps 30 from Buctouche Bar May 22.

Great Blue Herons were back in the first week of April, with a couple of birds before, i.e. 1 at Lorneville Mar.24 (Christie & Dr. M.Majka), 1 at Harvey, Albert Co. Mar.29 (Mary Majka), 2 at Lamoignon Apr. 3 (Frère Clarence LaBreton), 3 at Jomseg Apr.4 (Kermode Parr) and 4 at Caissie Capé Apr. 4 (Mr. & Mrs. Henry Cormier). It was not long before these big birds were very common, for example 20 at the mouth of the Kouchibouguac River Apr.10 (Christie et al.) and 50 at Daniel's Marsh, Albert Co. Apr.16 (Frère Léo Martin). The first Am. Bitterns reported were 1 at Letete Apr.11 (Majkas et al.), 1 at New Horton Apr.12 (C. Majka) and 2 at Bloomfield Apr.13 (Joan Hoyt). A single Black-crowned Night Heron was seen at Saint John Apr. 9 (David Smith) and 2 were at Eel River Bar Apr.12 (Lebel & Alan Madden). Not reported previously from northern N.B. is the Green Heron, 2 of which were at Eel River Crossing May 26 (Lebel).

Three species of egrets were reported. Two Common Egrets were seen at Castalia Apr.11 (Dr. & Mrs. Donnis Willcox) and two (the same ones?) at nearby White Head May 11 (Elmer Willcox). A Snowy Egret also appeared on White Head Island, being seen by Ellis Small about the second week of April and by Mrs. Carl Small on Apr.18. In Albert County, at Daniel's Marsh, 2 Snowies were seen Apr.24 (Rev. Ford Alward & Dr. Majka). One remained till the 30th. A fourth one was seen at St. Martins May 26 (Joyce Golden). It is interesting to note that several of this species reached Newfoundland this spring, part of a rather noteworthy flight. The lone Cattle Egret reported was at Hammond River May 8-11 (Saint John Naturalists' Club).

Little Blue Herons put in their regular spring appearance. Three were seen at Little Dipper Harbour May 16 (Johnstons). Two were adults while the third was a younger bird in white plumage with a few dark patches. An adult was also seen at St. Martins May 20 (Golden).

One of the highlights of the spring was the large number of Glossy Ibis seen. It has been found several times in May in previous years, though not in the last two, but this spring a probable total of 26 birds was reported from 11 localities. It is an unusual spring for them in Maine. This southern species apparently is increasing its breeding range and it is likely that some of these spring wanderers may nest in new areas. The reports were: 1 at St. Stephen Apr.25 to May 7 (Ranger R.W. McKay); at Eel River Bar, 1 on May 5; 3 from May 14 on, 4 there May 23 and 1 on June 3 (Lebel); 5 at Bloomfield May 7-11 (S.J.N.C.); 1 at Hammond River May 7 (Christie, Johnstons & Wilsons); 1 at Nash Creek May 9 (Lebel); 5 at Buctouche about May 12 or 13 and 1 there till the 17th (fide Pearce); near McGowan Corner, 3 on May 12 & 13 and 6 May 19-27 (Many Fredericton area observers); 1 at Newcastle May 18 (Pearce); 1 at Memramcook May 20 (Willcoxes) and 29th (Roid McManus); 2 at Jomseg May 30 (Tull & Tim Davis); and 2 at Jolicure May 31 (W.R. Whitman, fide Al Smith).

Al Smith saw an earlier flock of Canada Geese than those noted in our last issue, 25 at Sackville Feb.27. He also reports the largest concentration of geese, 2010, counted by Canadian Wildlife Service students on the Shepody River marsh Apr.13. Most Snow Goose reports come from Restigouche County this spring where 4 were at Dalhousie Apr. 9-12 (Lebel), 17 there Apr.10 (Maddens), 8 at Eel River Bar Apr.16 (Lebel) and 2 at Charlo River May 2 (Lebel). In York County Melvin Moore saw 3, with Canadas, at Koswick May 9.

Four reports of unusual ducks seen this spring are of a female Gadwall (a western species) at Southern Head Beach, Grand Manan Apr. 9 (Willcoxes) a male European Widgeon at Bloomfield May 23 (Johnstons), 2 male Common (Eurasian) Teal at Saint John West Apr.10 (Cecil Johnston & Jim Wilson), and a male Canvasback at Eel River Bar May 20-21 (Lebel).

A number of Blue-winged Teal were reported on rather early dates, namely a pair at Sackville Mar.29 (Al Smith), 7 on the Shepody marshes Apr. 2 (fide A. Smith), a pair at Waterside Apr. 4 (Christie & Majkas) and 4 at Douglas Apr. 9 (Beverley Schneider). Last year our earliest record was April 8.

The last of the large numbers of Barrow's Goldeneyes at Dalhousie was a lone male Apr. 12 (Lebel). Another large group were 16 seen at Middle Coverdale Apr. 14 (Doug Whitman). Large numbers of these ducks were reported in New England too this winter. More King Eiders than usual also moved south during the winter although they were not reported then in New Brunswick. However, we did get several on the return northward. Miss Willa MacCoubrey saw two subadult males at St. Andrews March 21. This was followed by a female and a young male at Cape Enrage on April 3 (Galinat, Tull, Germain & Pilote). The male was seen there the next day (Galinat). An adult male was there Apr. 12 (Chris Majka) and another young male Apr. 18 (Christie, Majkas, et al). The Willcoxes saw an adult male at Swallowtail Light, Grand Manan on April 11 and Madden and Lebel saw two adult males at Dalhousie Apr. 12-13. Finally a young male was seen at Letete May 16 (Johnston). Another King Eider was identified by Peter Pearce from a wing, foot and head of a female shot last fall at Nantucket, Grand Manan and sent to him by Vernon Bagley. A word should be said about identification of the young male King Eider. Illustrations in "Birds of North America" guide by Robbins and others might mislead one into thinking that any dark-headed, light-breasted young eider is a King yet there are many young Common Eiders showing that colour combination. One should note the orange bill and (at least in spring) the different head shape of the King.

The usual large numbers of scoters were reported in the Bay of Chaleur. Counts of Common Scoters at Dalhousie by Alan Madden and Jean-Paul Lebel were 2000+ Apr. 11, 3000+ Apr. 12 and 5000 Apr. 17. Further east, Father Lebel reports mostly Surf Scoters with several thousands between Dalhousie Junction and Point la Nim and between Charlo and New Mills in April. At Caraquet Hilaire Chiasson saw 5000 Surfs May 2.

A few scoters pass inland during migration and this year we have records at Fredericton Apr. 22 (Nettie Moore) and at Cambridge Apr. 23 (Enid Inch & Marian Belyea). At Fredericton there were 53 Common Scoters and several Surfs while at Cambridge were 20 Common and 1 Surf (later, on the 26th, there were 20). At the same time there were 10 Oldsquaws at Cambridge and 25 at Fredericton. Also reported was a White-winged Scoter at Douglas Apr. 22 and a Common Eider at Lower Jemseg Apr. 24 (both by Schneider).

We will confine our comments to only three species of hawks. First, an interesting observation of 5 Red-tailed Hawks in one field at New Horton Mar. 27 (Christie & Majkas) illustrates well the abundance of meadow mice in parts of Albert County. The much scarcer (here) Red-shouldered Hawk was reported near Hopewell Cape April 3 (Tull et al). Perhaps it was the same one, a beautiful adult, that was at Lower Coverdale Apr. 10 (Mary Majka et al). Also, Hilaire & Rose-Aline Chiasson saw an immature hawk on Shippegan Island May 14 which they believed to be this species. Red-shoulders are most often reported from the York-Charlotte County area.

News of the Peregrine Falcon involves two sightings this spring. One seen at Cape Enrage Apr. 12 by L. Sirois was reported by Chris Majka. A possible one was at Hammond River Apr. 25 (Charlie Wilson & Johnston). Although seen very briefly the size, shape and manner of flight suggested a Peregrine more than anything else.

Two shorebirds are of special interest because of their rarity in spring, the normal migration route at this time being over the centre of the continent. The first, an American Golden Plover was seen at Sheffield Apr. 24 on a Fredericton Field-Naturalists' Club field trip (reported by Nettie Moore). There have been a few previous spring reports, most subject to some doubt. A female Wilson's Phalarope at Eel River Crossing May 14 (Lebel) is only the second spring record in the province and the first at any time of year from the northern counties. The more usual Willet was also reported from the north for the first time, when Chiasson saw one at

Miscou Island May 19. Others were 1 at Buctouche Bay May 22 (Pearce), 1 at Memramcook Lake (McManus) and 5 at Waterside (S.J.N.C.) both May 29. A common nesting bird in several parts of Nova Scotia, this large shorebird has only been found nesting once (Bale Verte, 1966) in New Brunswick despite lots of seemingly good habitat. We do expect it to spread here eventually.

Mrs. Edith Cochran spotted two Upland Plovers back in the fields behind her house at Salisbury on May 6. On the 18th David Clark saw 6 there. 1971 will be the year they are found nesting for the first time in New Brunswick.

Jean-Paul Lebel reports an unusual number of Short-billed Dowitchers and Dunlin for spring migration. Both are usually seen only in small numbers at this time of year. At Eel River Bar he saw 127 Dowitchers and 30 Dunlin May 26. During that night hundreds of these shorebirds (and others) were migrating overhead at Dalhousie and the next day there were 372 Dowitchers at Eel River Bar.

A most unusual observation has just come to light. Warden A. McLain of Kouchibouguac National Park was on the shore in the Park on May 31 when six strange shorebirds flew in. He does not know shorebirds but had his bird book with him and ascertained them to be oyster-catchers because of their black and white coloration and laterally compressed orange bill. He reported this to Peter Pearce who questioned him closely about the birds' appearance. Warden McLain was positive that the bird's bills were orange, not red, and that the backs were black, not brownish. Both these features are characteristics of the European Oystercatcher, not the American species. A further field mark, a white dowitcher-like mark on the lower back distinguishes the European bird, but Mr. McLain could not recall whether this was present. At any rate, it seems sure that the birds were oyster-catchers, distinctive birds likely to be confused with nothing else and their characteristics suggest they were more likely the European than the American species. The American Oyster-catcher, a relatively southern bird has not been found in New Brunswick for at least 80 years and the European species possibly has not been reported in North America south of Greenland.

Spring is not a time of year when many interesting pelagic birds such as shearwaters are seen at sea in New Brunswick waters. Chris Majka spent the period May 17-25 aboard the oceanographic vessel CSS Hudson in the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, roughly in the area between Grand Manan, Briar Island, N.S. He saw more species of small landbirds than seabirds at this time, during the peak of warbler migration. The only normal pelagic birds seen were the ubiquitous Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls, terns, a few Parasitic Jaegers, Northern Phalaropes, Black-legged Kittiwakes and a single Wilson's Petrel (May 17). Other waterbirds were Double-crested Cormorants, Common Eiders and a Common Snipe that came on board ship. The many landbirds seen were Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Barn and Cliff Swallows, Brown Thrasher (May 17), Red-winged Blackbird, Grackle, Am. Goldfinch, Savannah, Chipping and White-throated Sparrows, and the following Warblers, Parula, Yellow, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat and Northern Waterthrush.

At Eel River Bar May 4 Father Lebel saw a tern which he believes was a Common Tern. This is quite an early date for it. Black Terns (3) were back at Lower Jemseg May 8 (S.J.N.C.). Some readers may recall that two years ago in July a White-winged Black Tern was seen with Black Terns at Grand Point. This year we wonder if perhaps the same individual might not be back again, for one was seen by Peter Pearce and many others in the McGowan Corner area May 23 to 26. There are only a few records of this European species in North America.

A Whip-poor-will was back at Jacquet River May 9 (Lebel) the same day that an early Ruby-throated Hummingbird was seen at Browns Flat (Stan Gorham). Two early Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at Grand Manan Apr. 10 (Willcoxes). Two E. Kingbirds were at Midway, Albert Co. May 8 (Willcoxes). Eastern Phoebes put in their appearance

Apr. 10-11, e.g. 1 at "The Whistle" Grand Manan (Willcoxes) and 1 at Cambridge (Inch) both Apr. 10 and 1 near St. George Apr. 11 (Johnstons).

Two Tree Swallows and a Cliff Swallow were back very early at Alma April 5 (Christie). The next Tree Swallows were one at Southern Head Apr. 11 (Willcoxes) and 3 at Saint John West Apr. 21 (Johnston). Most Cliff Swallows were a full month later. One Bank Swallow was a couple of weeks ahead of its kin at Waterside Apr. 25 (Moncton Naturalists' Club). The first Barn Swallow seems to be one Apr. 29 at Douglas (Schneider) and Purple Martins, two at Robertson Pt., Grand Lake Apr. 30 (fide Roy Hunter). One Rough-winged Swallow, the species just now spreading its breeding range into New Brunswick, was seen at Mill Settlement, Sunbury Co., May 22 (Christie). It was apparently on the move for it could not be located there the following day.

The Willcoxes saw a Gray Jay on Grand Manan Easter Weekend, only the second record we have of this species on the island. The first was last fall. With excellent habitat available a couple of birds remaining on the island to nest could make Gray Jays as common there as in the rest of the province.

The Riverview Mockingbird was seen May 2 (Doug Whitman) but no other spring reports have been received. Brown Thrashers were noted May 10 near New River Station (Wilson), May 13 at Saint John West (Jan Dexter) and May 19 at Sackville (Loe Calkins, fide A. Smith).

In our last number we reported that some Robin movement may have taken place as early as Feb. 28. However, it was not until Mar. 29 when flocks of more than about 5 could be seen e.g. 35 at Fundy Park (Mary Majka). On April 4 a lot of reports suggest that many had come into the southern part of the province. Several inland areas had their first Robins that day e.g. Bloomfield (Hoyt), Woodstock (Marjorie Gray) and the Fredericton area (fide Parr). Arrivals in the northern part of the province were still later, for Cecil Johnston found no Robins north of Chatham on his way to Bathurst Apr. 5. Our first reports from those areas are April 11, 1 at Six Roads, Gloucester Co. (Clarence LeBreton); April 12, 1 at Tide Head (Madden); and Apr. 13, first migrants at Delhousie (Lebel) and 3 at Tide Head, 2 at McLeod Siding, 5 at Dundee and 3 at Balmoral (all by Madden). Such slow passage across the province is quite typical of birds like the Robin which migrate early when snow on the ground and bad weather conditions may retard their progress. Later arrivals, in May, tend to arrive at very nearly the same time in most of the province.

Father Lebel saw 3 H. Bluebirds (Male and 2 females) at Jacquot River May 19. An early Water Pipit was seen Apr. 22 (F.F.N.C.) somewhere between Fredericton and Lepreau. A flock of 100-plus of these birds were at Shippegan Island May 22 (Chiesson). The rare (here) Loggerhead Shrike was reported from Miscou Island May 19 (Chiesson).

The usual species of warblers seemed to appear at about the usual times. The first ones were Palms and Myrtles May 1 in coastal Albert County (Christie & Majka). May 15 and 16 produced most observers' first reports of several species. There was no repeat of 1970's large flight of Scarlet Tanagers. There were few reports, the first of which was a male at Moncton May 17 (Dr. Edgett, fide Dr. Majka). Others were reported at Saint John West May 24 (Dexter) and Rothesay May 25 (Harley Jolly); Baltimore Orioles were seen first May 13, a male at Saint John West (Bruce Bosence) and 2 at Fredericton (Marguerite McNair). The first Rose-breasted Grosbeak was a female at Douglas May 8 (Schneider). Cecil Johnston spotted a female Indigo Bunting at St. Martins May 23. It is usually overlooked and we have many more reports of the brilliantly coloured male, one of which was at Belmont, St. John Co. May 27 (Eldon Fletcher).

Kermode Parr saw a flock of 30 Common Redpolls about April 11 at Lower Sheffield, one of few reports of the species this year. Alan Madden found some of the other finches fairly common in Restigouche County in March when on the 23rd he

saw 100+ Pine Siskins at Rapids Depot, 250 Evening Grosbeaks between Kedgwick and Kedgwick River and 30+ Pine Grosbeaks between Robinsonville and Kedgwick River.

BRILLIANT SHOREBIRDS

University of Montreal biologists will be colour marking, banding and tagging shorebirds on the Magdalens (yellow) and Sable Island (red) this summer. Please report any observations of birds with dyed underparts or plastic tags on the leg or wing. The tag will be marked with 6 digits large enough to be ready with binoculars. Please report all details concerning any such birds and assist in this study of migration routes.

REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS, FISHES

Stanley Gorham our prime observer of amphibians, is one of the few persons willing to wade in ponds and ditches on cool April nights to observe the appearance and breeding activities of salamanders and frogs. Observing regularly at Oak Pt. and Browns Flat, he made the following observations. Spotted Salamander: first one Apr. 6?, 14 on Apr. 15, 54 on Apr. 23, 30 on Apr. 25. Blue-spotted Salamander: two on Apr. 15, 2 on Apr. 23. Spring Peepers: first one Apr. 25. Leopard Frogs: 1 on Apr. 25; Green Frog: 1 on Apr. 25; Bullfrog: 1 on May 14. Elsewhere Joan and Jim Wilson heard the first Spring Peepers calling at Hillidgville Apr. 19. At South Bay they were heard first Apr. 27 (Dot Laskey). In Rothesay Alan Heward found a Wood Frog out Apr. 13 and observed eggs of this species two days later.

Jan Dexter found a Garter Snake out Apr. 29 at Saint John West and Hugh Cunningham reports catching a Lamprey at Hammond River Apr. 26.

INVERTEBRATES

Crickets began to chirp early at St. Arthur, near Campbellton. Alan Madden heard one there March 29. In 1969 he heard several Mar. 21. The reason apparently is the heat of fires at a dump there.

Also unusual is the observation of four Water Boatmen in a tidal pool at Red Head Apr. 25 (Christie). These insects occur normally in slightly brackish pools on tidal marshes but a pool on the shore well below the high tide line is most unusual. One possibility is that these bugs had been flying that day and landed temporarily in this tidal pool.

Juno bugs (beetles) were first noted May 26 at Riverview (Whitman).

Earthworms often appear on the surface in great numbers after warm rains. Such must have been the case when David Smith observed thousands of worms on the pavement the morning of April 15 at Saint John.

FLORA

Mrs. Marjorie Grey has reported most of the information we have on the blooming of wildflowers. She reports Dandelion blooming on the early date of April 8 and has confirmed that it was definitely not Coltsfoot, a very early blooming plant often mistakenly called Dandelion. The Coltsfoot was blooming at Saint John Apr. 6, the same date as last year (Christie) and at Grand Manan Apr. 11 (Elmer Wilcox). It was not until May 5 when Mary Hajka noted blooms at Saint John that we had another report of Dandelion. At Woodstock Mrs. Grey reported Dogtooth Violet blooming May 2, Yellow Violet May 12 and a blue violet, a white violet, Spring Beauty, Wood Anemone, Bloodroot, and Red Trillium on May 13. At Grand Manan the Red Trillium was just beginning to come into bloom on May 16 (Wilcox).

There are two species of Toothwort growing in New Brunswick woodlands. The more common and widespread one is Dentaria diphylla, whereas D. maxima, although

often common where it is found, occurs primarily in Carleton County and a few places in York County. It was therefore quite a surprise when it was found to be abundant on a hillside at Hampton May 14 (Christie & Wilson). A close check of collections in the museum herbarium shows that a specimen found by G.U. Hay June 10, 1882 at Long Lake, Saint John, is also maxima, although originally identified as diphylla. The two species are quite variable and fairly similar to each other. D. maxima has generally sharper-toothed leaves and the lateral leaflets often are deeply cleft into two segments. Its rootstalk is constricted at intervals so that it has a tendency to break into segments. Watch the toothworts in your area and if any show these characteristics send in a sample. We'd be glad to examine them.

HAS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRED?

The following subscriptions to the N.B. Naturalist have expired. The May issue will be the last one received by: Mrs. J.C. Boynton, W.V.F. Brooks, Miss Helen Brown, Peter Cook, J.A. Fownes, Mrs. Geo. Heidman, Mrs. C. Irving, Don Peacock, Win Plume, Kaare Smith, L.B. Smith, Mrs. O.F. Thompson, F.E. Webb, Mrs. M.S. Walker.

CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION

The Canadian Audubon Society changed its name and structure in May and is now the Canadian Nature Federation which it is hoped will become a strong organization representative of all Canadian naturalists. The C.N.F. will hold its first annual meeting in Ottawa Sep.17-19. It is also sponsoring an exhibition of works by Canadian Nature Artists at the National Library and Archives Sep.11-25. If in Ottawa, don't miss it! The president of the new organization is Dr. Theodore Mosquin of Aylmer East, P.Q. New Brunswick directors are Jan Dexter of Saint John West, representing the three naturalists' clubs here, and Eric Tull of Moncton, representing C.N.F. members in the province. The new nature federation wants very much to have a provincial federation formed in New Brunswick too, about which we should be hearing more soon. Their new magazine, Nature Canada, will appear in January 1972. Write for more information to the C.N.F., 46 Elgin St., Ottawa K1P 5K6.

RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS

Years ago, ornithologists demanded that a specimen be taken before the report of an unusual species be considered as valid. Otherwise, it was felt to be hypothetical and probably very doubtful. The easy availability of good binoculars and excellent field guides has made sight records much more reputable in the eyes of academic ornithology. This is especially true for a bird seen by several persons with a full account of the details of the sighting preserved. This museum has available a card that can and should be filled in by the observer of a very unusual species, such as the Gadwall, Eur. Widgeon, Am. Golden Plover, Wilson's Phalarope and White-winged Black Tern reported in this issue. These cards, in our files, preserve the original information for future researchers. If you are an active birdwatcher, you should have a few of these cards on hand. We will send them on request.

When you see something very unusual, make notes of what you see, get other bird-watchers out to confirm your sighting and to give them the chance to enjoy the bird too, and photograph the bird if possible. It's the only way to stamp out the skeptical reception you'll get when you tell someone you had a Bahama Bananaquit in your backyard yesterday!