



It is with great sadness that we report the death of one of the museum's faithful correspondents, Dr. John E. Rigby, M.L.A., of St. Andrews. He was Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, but was best known to readers of this newsletter as an active naturalist in Charlotte County, compiler of the St. Andrews Christmas Bird Count and observer for the Oak Hill Breeding Bird Survey.

An unfortunate error was made in our last issue, re the announcement of a design contest. The word "not" was omitted accidentally from a sentence dealing with the size of the design. It should have been: The design should not occupy more than 35 square inches of the 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 11 page. Our apologies to those who have had ideas greater than 35 square inches. Perhaps they can be modified for a smaller size. Deadline for submission is extended to November 19.

Since last December we have been using a mechanical collator for assembling the New Brunswick Naturalist. It saves a great deal of time but does not allow for spotting blank or poorly printed pages. If you receive a defective issue, write and we will supply the missing pages.

Summer weather exhibited no great extremes this year. June averaged just slightly warmer than average, July slightly cooler. Both months were somewhat wetter than usual except during July when southwestern areas of the province had near normal precipitation. As a result, there likely were no serious weather-related problems for plant and animal life.

#### MAMMALS

Notes on mammals were scarcely reported during June and July. Twelve or more Raccoons visited the feeding station of Mr. and Mrs. Don Patterson at Sandy Point, Saint John, on June 5. It was the largest group seen till that time this year. In such a situation there is a great opportunity for studying the interesting behaviour of these animals. On this particular evening one snarling dispute ended with three raccoons pursuing a fourth to the very tip of an apple branch, until all but one fell to the ground from the sagging branch.

Harbour Porpoises and whales often can be seen in the Bay of Fundy, as they were by Cecil Johnston on July 5 while crossing between Saint John and Digby on the Princess of Acadia. It is usually impossible to tell what species of whale is seen.

#### BIRDS

During summer, the big event in terms of effort expended and amount of information about birds obtained, is the annual Breeding Bird Survey, organized across the continent by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

This survey consists of many randomly located routes, each with 50 sampling points, at half mile intervals. Starting a half hour before sunrise, on a day in June, an observer records all the birds he sees and hears during a three minute period at each of these points. The data obtained can reveal increases and decreases of song birds found in near-wood habitats.

Last year we printed the totals of each species for all the survey routes in New Brunswick, but this year we will be reporting only on trends and changes revealed. Most birds showed no change. The routes censused were Green River, Grand Falls, Kedgwick River, Nopisiguit River, Balmoral, Paquetville, Escuminac, Plaster Rock, Cleverdale, Napadogan, Blackville, Red Bank, Richibucto, Fontaine, Jolicure, Albert, Oak Hill, McAdam, Penfield Ridge, Saint John, Jemasog, Washademoak, Hampton and Penobscuis. We are indebted for the hours of work and travel of these early-rising observers: Ford Alward, Marion Belyce, Hilsaire Chiasson, David Christie, Andy Dean, Henrik Deichmann, Cliff Jones, Darrell Kitchen, Jean-Paul Label, Alan Hadden, Dr. M. Hajka, Peter Pearce, Dr. Jack Rigby, Al Smith, Murray Watters and Jim Wilson, as well as their mosquito-tormented assistants: Al Dillard, Rose-Aline Chiasson, David Clark, Albert Finnerore, Harold Hatheway, Enid Inch, Janice Kitchen, Wills MacCoubrey, Mark Hajka, Mary Hajka, Nettie Moore, Pamela Rigby, David Smith and Eric Tull.

On July 25 at Miscou Point Wills MacCoubrey saw three loons in breeding plumage which she has identified as Arctic Loons, a species for which there are no satisfactory records for New Brunswick. Nettie Moore, who accompanied her did not study the loons, dismissing them as probably Red-throats, while she concentrated on the King Eiders that were there. Had both observers studied the loons closely and submitted a full report on the characteristics observed, we might have had quite a good record for this species. Any time its presence has been suspected here before, the birds seen have been in the very-difficult-to-identify winter plumage.

The first shearwaters reported this year were on June 10 when Sooties were seen off Machias Seal Island (Charles Dorchester) and 1 Greater was observed in the Grand Manan Channel from the M.V. Grand Manan (Pearce). By early July both were more common with 19 Greaters and 20 Sooties seen from the Princess of Acadia on July 2 (Tull). Both Leachs and Wilson's Petrels were seen off Machias Seal Island on June 10 and July 8 (Dorchester).

A Great Cormorant, primarily a winter bird here, was at Cape Jourimain, near Bayfield, on July 5 (Christie & Tull). Nesting phenology of Double-crested Cormorants seemed late this year on Menawagonish Island, off Saint John, where on July 19 a few nests still contained eggs and several had newly hatched young still with their egg tooth present. Normally at that time most young would be as big as the adults. Herring Gulls also had more eggs and fewer large young than usual at this breeding colony (Will Astle, Christie et al). Possibly the backward weather of April and the first half of May had retarded the commencement of nesting.

Green Herons were again reported in northern New Brunswick with 2 at Eol River Crossing June 14 (Label) and 1 at Shippegan Gully July 25 (MacCoubrey). A Common Egret at Upper Loch Lomond, St. John County on July 15 (Christie, Mary Hajka, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Brooks) was not seen again despite frequent visits. A Snowy Egret, found dead at Red Head Marsh on June 7 (Leo Maillet), may have been one of the two seen at Saint John West in late May. The rare Least Bittern is still to be found at Red Head Marsh, where one was seen July 30 (Deichmann). One Glossy Ibis, a remnant of the spring flight which brought several of these southern waders to the province, was seen at Baie Verte in the first week of July (Andy McGinnis, *vide* Al Smith).

Hilsaire Chiasson passed on distressing news about the heron colony at Inkerman, Gloucester County. Visiting on June 11 he determined that about one-third of the

birds were Great Blue Herons, the remainder Black-crowned Night Herons and that about two dozen adults had been shot by vandals! With the local game wardens aware of the event, hopefully a repeat catastrophe can be prevented.

Two Oldsquaw, lingering for the summer, were seen between Ingalls Head and Kent Island on June 12 (Pearce). The last migrants are usually gone by the first week of May. Another winter duck seen this summer was the King Eider, normally rare here even in winter. An adult male in breeding plumage was at Bancroft Point, Grand Manan, June 11-12 (Pearce) and a subadult male and a female were at Miscou Point July 24 (Moore & MacCoubrey).

Sharp-shinned Hawks seemed to be having a bad time on June 29. One adult was chased out of the woods and across a road by a very irate Robin near First Lake, Madawaska County and later another, flying above the woods at Twenty-seven Mile Brook, Restigouche County, was being harried by 2 Tree Swallows (Christie & Mary Majka). The same day, a Sparrow Hawk, perched on a birch stub was bearing the brunt of a raucous vocal attack by 2 Robins perched nearby, again in the First Lake area. Especially when they have flightless young, many birds are sufficiently motivated to drive much larger intruders, as is especially illustrated by the valiant forays of the Kingbird against foes as large as hawks, crows and ravens.

A propos of the report in our last issue of a Sparrow Hawk carrying a Saw-whet Owl, we have an interesting account from Donald Kimball of another Sparrow Hawk with an unusually large prey. On Apr. 16 while he was watching a Killdeer on the shore of the river at Hartland, a Sparrow Hawk swooped down, scaring the Killdeer which it hit in flight. As the falcon struggled to carry the Killdeer it was mobbed by two Crows and forced to drop its prey which one of the crows soon picked apart and ate. The initial part of this episode was accompanied by a great racket from the reluctant Killdeer, always a noisy bird when threatened.

A Red-shouldered Hawk was at Westfield June 11 (Kit Graham) and a Peregrine Falcon at Shippegan Gully July 24 (MacCoubrey & Moore). Several Osprey nests were reported but we don't know whether most of them were successful or not. Anyone who knows of an active Osprey nest who has not yet reported it, is urged to write soon.

The only Am. Coot reported was 1 at Red Head Marsh July 30 (Deichmann). Sora and Virginia Rails were seen and/or heard at several places.

The shorebird of the summer was the Ruff at Cape Jourimain. Discovered on July 1 by Andy McGinnis this male in full breeding plumage with a glossy, black ruff was seen by several other observers until at least July 20 when it was beginning to moult into winter plumage. Particularly interesting was the observation of Dr. Majka who on July 5 saw not only the male, but also a female Ruff, or reeve. On this occasion the Ruff, stirred by the presence of a female, spread out his feathered collar and ear tufts and strutted erectly. Although he ignored other shorebirds which were in the vicinity he was observed to rush towards any Red-winged Blackbirds that came near, and to drive them away. Such aggressive behaviour towards blackbirds possibly was because of the resemblance of their plumage to a dark coloured, dominant Ruff. The only previous records of this species in New Brunswick are three Nineteenth Century specimens, one from St. Andrews and two from Grand Manan.

Other unusual shorebirds noted were an Am. Golden Plover (seldom seen in spring) at Saint John West June 11 (Cecil Johnston) and a Marbled Godwit (third record since 1879) at Castalia July 6 (R. Kenneth Edwards). Though the godwit was not seen in flight, general coloration ruled out the more common Hudsonian Godwit.

Upland Plovers were back in the usual field at the corner of Routes 2 and 112 near Salisbury. On July 8 nine were in view at once and there were probably at least

15 seen altogether (Moncton Nat. Club).

Willats appear to be increasing along Northumberland Strait. Tony Erskine obtained the first definite nesting record for the province at Bale-Verte in 1966. Three were seen there on July 9 this year (Tull & Wayne Neily), and at Cape Jourimain, in the Cape Tormentine area, there were at least six pairs present on July 5 (Christie, Tull & Hajkas) when two small flightless young were seen with one of them. They do not seem to be nesting yet along our shore of the Bay of Fundy, as they do in Nova Scotia, but a few were seen. At Saints' Rest Marsh, Saint John West, there was one on June 11 and 2 on July 21 (Johnston). On Grand Manan, one was seen at Castalia June 12 (Pearce) and 2 at Fish Head June 26 (Edwards).

The customary, very short interval between the end of spring shorebird migration and the appearance of the first southward bound transients is illustrated by sightings to mid-June and from the first week of July. Some examples: 1 Black-bellied Plover at Castalia June 15 (Pearce), 1 Ruddy Turnstone at Saint John West June 11 (Johnston) and another at Maces Bay July 3 (Deichmann), 2 Greater Yellowlegs at Castalia June 12 (Pearce), 1 Greater and 20 Lesser Yellowlegs and 25 Short-billed Dowitchers at Cape Jourimain July 4 (Hajkas et al), 1 Dunlin at Cape Jourimain July 5 (Christie et al), 1500 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Mary's Pt. June 11, and 11 there July 3 (Christie & Hajkas). Some of these birds may have been non-breeding individuals which do not travel all the way to the northern nesting grounds. Al Smith felt that yellowlegs were present throughout the period at Cape Jourimain. The Cape Jourimain marshes, incidentally, are worthwhile visiting if you are anywhere near Cape Tormentine. They are the marshes at the end of what was to be the causeway to Prince Edward Island, and are reached by travelling a mile or two west of Bayfield on Route 955 and driving out the more westerly of the two causeway roadbeds. The area is excellent for shorebirds and dabbling ducks.

Jean-Paul Label obtained his first spring record of Sanderling this year, 1 at Eel River Bar June 3. Like many shorebirds, it is common here in fall, but rare in spring. A late Red Phalarope was seen off Seal Cove June 15 by Preston Wilcox (fide Pearce).

A few jaegers were reported, the first, a Pomarine near Machias Seal Island <sup>June 27</sup> (Will Russell, fide Bill Townsend). Another Pomarine was chasing Gannets in Shippegan Gully July 24 (Moore & MacCoubrey). Other Pomarines were seen from the Princess of Acadia but on the Nova Scotian side of the Bay (Tull). Parasitic Jaegers were also seen from the "Princess" (Tull et al) and one was off Machias Seal Island July 8 (Dorchester et al). A Great Skua was seen from the "Princess", off Saint John July 22 (Tull, Hajkas et al), constituting the fourth specific record for the province.

A "winter plumage adult" Sabine's Gull was reported June 16 off "The Whistle," at the northern tip of Grand Manan (Edwards). This plumage description suggests it was likely a year old, non-breeding bird, accounting partly for its occurrence here at an unusual time of year. A Bonaparte's Gull fairly common along the east coast in summer, appeared inland at Grand Point on Grand Lake July 14 (Moore).

Common Terns seem to have been more numerous in the lower Saint John valley this year. A few occurred throughout the summer in Saint John Harbour (Christie) where they haven't been seen the last few years. In Belleisle Bay, Ron Weir said there were "many times more than in the past five years." Some of them may have come from the colony on Grassy Island at Oak Point where Henrik Deichmann reported about 160 nests July 5. He also visited tern colonies on Hog Island (19 nests) at the mouth of the Washademoak, Goat Island (42 nests) in Grand Lake, "Sand Island" (16 nests) 5 miles above Hactaquac Dam and Second Eel Lake (56 nests). The latter locality showed a marked increase over his 1970 visit there. The Grassy Island and Goat Island colonies also had several nests of Great Black-backed Gulls which probably were preying on the terns.

Nesting success of the thousands of Arctic Terns on Machias Seal Island was reportedly poor this year because of cool damp weather there (Jack Russell). The first Forster's Tern ever reported for New Brunswick was discovered at Castalia Marsh July 14 by R. Ken Edwards who described it as an immature. Unfortunately, the bird did not remain to be photographed or to be seen by other observers. Three Black Tern nests were discovered this summer at Bloomfield (Clark), an area where nesting had been suspected for a few years. Al Smith suspects that they are nesting also at Jolicure Marshes where the birds are now seen regularly in summer.

A few Common Murres were again seen at Machias Seal Island, reports being 1 on June 10 and 4 on July 8 (Dorchester et al) and 1 on July 29 (Saint John Naturalists' Club).

Black-billed Cuckoos were particularly common in eastern New Brunswick. The earliest was at Flint Hill, Albert County June 11 (Christie & Mark Hajka). Dr. H. Harries and Al Smith both found them common in the Sackville area where they do not usually see them. Stuart Tingley saw 2 at Midgie on June 23. Other eastern Westmorland County sightings came from Cape Jourimain, Scoudouc and LeBlanc Office. Forty-six on the B.B.S. included 18 at Blackville, 9 at Red Bank, 6 at Jolicure, and 5 at Hampton. Nests were found at Petitcodiac (Mrs. R.E. Carter), Goshen (Marguerite Hope) and Saint John (Mrs. Roy Lewis). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo, usually a fall vagrant here, was seen at Kent Island June 12 (Pearce). Father Lebel heard Whip-poor-wills on June 3 at two localities where he had not previously found them, Eel River Bar and Craig Road, near Charlo. He found them regularly at Jacquet River when he lived there. Whip-poor-wills are very local in distribution, not being found in most areas, but common in others. Other reports came from South Bay, one heard on June 7 (Muriel Wheaton) and Blackville, two on the B.B.S. (Pearce).

Only 41 Yellow-shafted Flickers were recorded on the B.B.S., versus 82 last year and 84 the year before. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers dropped to 275, from 382 last year but essentially the same as the 263 recorded in 1970. Most of the decrease was on routes in southern N.B. The B.B.S. yielded three Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers, at Kedgwick River (Hadden), Cloverdale (Deichmann) and Pennfield Ridge (Christie). The much more rare Northern Three-toed Woodpecker was found nesting in the U.N.B. Woodlot at Fredericton by Harold Ferguson on June 14. Both male and female were seen carrying food to the nest the next day. This is only the fourth nest found in the province. (Many persons are confused by the 1957 name changes for these two species. Older books will have the names "Arctic 3-toed" and "American 3-toed." The "Arctic" should now be referred to as Black-backed and the "American" as Northern. Note that "Arctic" does not equal "Northern".)

Great Crested Flycatchers, at the northern edge of their range here, were more widely seen than usual. They normally are an uncommon bird of the middle and upper Saint John valley with occasional ones elsewhere. Ron Weir found pairs at 2 sites on the Kingston Peninsula and Jim Wilson located at least 3 pairs in the Hammond River area. Other marginal birds were 1 at Pennfield June 17 and July 1 (Wilson) and 1 at Cambridge June 19 (Belyea). A wandering bird was at Machias Seal Island June 27 (Will Russell).

breeding

Stan Gorham obtained the second provincial record of Rough-winged Swallow when he saw 2 adults feeding 4 flying young at Browns Flat July 30. At St. Andrews, Wills MacCoubrey notes, that for the third year in a row, year-old, brown-backed Tree Swallows appeared late in June and, for several days, disrupted nesting activities of the resident swallows in her two nest boxes. The two pairs eventually succeeded in rearing four young each.

A flock of 500+ Common Ravens, along with 300 Herring and 2 Great Black-backed Gulls was seen July 5 at LeBlanc Office, Westmorland Co., in a field where lobster

shells had been applied as fertilizer (Tull, Christie & Hajkas). An unknown number more were hidden in the nearby forest.

Red-breasted Nuthatch, still scarce, showed an increase to 28 on the B.B.S. from 16 and 17 in 1971 and 1970. Most were seen in northern N.B. Two House Wrens were seen June 13, and a few days thereafter, at Hartland (Michael Rigby & Kimball) where they occupied two houses but did not nest successfully. At Sackville, a more unusual area for them, a bachelor male built nests in two houses and was present for several days during July (Gordon Burns). A Long-billed Marsh Wren was seen July 23 at Jolicure (Tull et al) and another was at Hammond River July 30 (Wilson).

Four Mockingbirds were reported at Cloverdale June 10 (Deichmann), Cambridge June 19 (Belyea), Sussex from late in June through at least July 12 (Mrs. Mildred Gay) and Lower Coverdale July 6 and 9 (Doug Whitman). The only Brown Thrasher was at Hazerill Settlement, York Co., July 24 (Deichmann).

Wood Thrushes which have been increasing steadily in New Brunswick for at least ten years were observed on eleven B.B.S. routes. In Albert County, where a survey of thrushes done in 1968 was repeated this year 32 were recorded versus 6 before (Christie et al). Preliminary data also indicate more Robins, Veeries and Hermit Thrushes than in 1968. Swainson's Thrushes were recorded in essentially the same numbers each year.

For the first time in several years the picture of Eastern Bluebird numbers in the province seems encouraging. Early June reports came from Woodstock (pair - Marjorie Gray), Magaguadavic Lake (pair - Dean & Moore), Hammond River (5 - Wilson), Fundy Park (1-Bruce Bradbury), Mary's Point (1-Tim Davis & Tull). Along the Old Saint John Road, in the New River Station-Pennfield area, Jim Wilson located 9 breeding pairs and one singing male. Of nine nesting attempts located there, 6 were in nest boxes he had erected and 3 in natural cavities.

Cedar Waxwings, always a late arrival, were not reported until June 2 at Fredericton (Christie). Warbling Vireos which we learned last year were fairly common in Moncton and some other areas of eastern N.B. were back again. Four were observed on a Moncton Naturalists' Club field trip July 8 in one residential area of the city.

Connecticut Warblers have been reported only twice previously in New Brunswick. On June 12, two were captured and banded at Kent Island by Roger Elinson. One of these, an apparent female, was examined by Peter Pearce and Chuck Huntington. Mourning Warblers, a species inhabiting brushy, spruce-fir forest openings, especially cut-over areas, can be found readily when one visits the proper habitat. Ron Weir, interested in the species, located them at 20 sites on the Kingston Peninsula with up to 3 or 4 singing males at each. The B.B.S. total for the province was 50, of which 12 were on the Albert route (Alward) and 10 at Penobscuis (Christie).

Bobolinks may have been more common this summer. The B.B.S. recorded 561, up from 381 and 312 in 1971 and 1970. As compared to 1971, 10 routes showed increases, 4 remained the same and 3 decreased.

Ten Baltimore Orioles were found by the B.B.S. versus 4 and 2 in 1971 and 1970, respectively. This included one or two birds each at Plaster Rock, Cloverdale, McAdam, Jemseg, Washademoak, Hampton and Penobscuis. Six were visiting a Saint John bird feeder, to eat jam, June 5 (Pattersons). On the Kingston Peninsula they were seen at 3 sites during July (Weir) and a pair nested and successfully raised young at St. Andrews (David Walker), where they do not usually do so.

A female Cardinal made two short visits to the Pattersons' feeder at Sandy Point, Saint John June 5. Cardinals are seen here very irregularly. Besides the

Indigo Buntings reported last issue, a male was seen for 6 days in May at St. Andrew's (vide MacCoubrey). Another was at Canterbury June 18 (Kimball).

The distribution of Evening Grosbeaks as shown by the B.B.S. was much the same as in 1971 with the largest numbers at Plaster Rock (933-Watters), Cloverdale (215-Deichmann), Nepisiguit River (125-Christie) and Nepadogan (117-Jones).

Pine Grosbeaks were more common than usual in the hilly areas of southern N.B. A pair July 19 on the road from Hampton to Midland were only the second July sighting Ron Weir has had in six years on the Kingston Peninsula. In Albert County small numbers could be seen along the roads almost daily (Christie et al). Not a single Red Crossbill was reported and there was only one White-winged Crossbill, on the Cloverdale B.B.S. route (Deichmann).

Two Rufous-sided Towhees were seen in Albert County July 20, one on the East Branch Trail in Fundy Park (Wayne Nordstrom) and a male at Caledonia Mountain (Dr. Majka). A male Grasshopper Sparrow, was discovered July 9 near Wawaig, Charlotte County, by Jim Rising. Very few of them are seen here.

The Field Sparrow which has been increasingly frequent in recent years was found nesting this summer, the first record for the province. At Fredericton, Cliff Jones discovered a singing male about June 27 and Peter and Theresa Pearce found its nest containing 1 egg and 3 young on July 1. The next day there were four young. Two other Field Sparrows were seen, singing males at Roxton June 10 (Christie & Tull) and Caledonia Mountain July 16 (Christie & Mary Majka).

A number of albino birds were reported in late July and early August. An all white Common Crow was at Chapman Corner July 25 (Gordon Burns). A white swallow of unknown species was at White Head August 3 and 8 (Nancy Small). Two albino Robins were seen at Cambridge August 3-8 and August 5 (Enid Inch).

#### INVERTEBRATES & FLORA

An early Black Swallowtail was seen at Cambridge June 4 (Inch) and an early Baltimore butterfly was out at Albert July 3 (David Alward). Two Monarchs were seen July 2, one at Gagetown (Inch) and one at Mary's Point (Christie). Because of the wet cool spring ideal breeding conditions seem to have been created for mosquitoes and black flies. At any rate, it was observed generally that the numbers of these pesky insects were greater than usual, particularly during June.

An interesting experience was had at Mary's Point on July 9 (Christie & Majka), when millions of sand fleas (Talorchestia longicornis) were active on the beach. Everywhere they scurried or hopped, feeding on fragments of sea weed, dragging tiny bits of grass, burrowing into the sand. Although a few of these little crustaceans had been seen there from time to time on previous visits never had large numbers been observed. Apparently they are active usually only at night. The great activity in daylight hours (about 6-7 p.m. ADT) may have been because there had just been a heavy thunder shower. Or maybe they had emerged one day too early to see the total solar eclipse!

Very few notes on plants have been received. Andy Dean noted Rhodora first blooming at Fredericton May 31. As our native Rhododendron it forms spectacular roadside shows in many areas during June. He also reported Clintonia and Canada Mayflower (False Lily-of-the-valley) at Fredericton June 3, a rather late date for start of flowering of these two. Marjorie Gray reports a good crop of Wild Strawberries and Raspberries at Woodstock, as did Mary Majka at Caledonia Mountain. At Woodstock both Pine and Choke Cherries produced only a light crop of "berries."