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N. B. Naturalist

Le Naturaliste du N.-B.





New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists / La Fédération des naturalistes du Nouveau-Brunswick

277 avenue Douglas Avenue, Saint John, N.B. E2K 1E5 Canada

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Saw-whet Owl / Petite Nyctale by / par Rod Cumberland.

Our Volunteers / Nos volontaires

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White-water Botanizing

James Goltz

In waterfalls and rapids is the essence of wilderness. The sights and sounds of water cascading over waterfalls and coursing through chutes and rapids are mesmerizing, spectacular, romantic and sometimes terrifying. If you listen closely you might imagine that you hear the muffled singing of voyageurs, explorers and lumberjacks, captured for all time in the water's powerful roar.

Few species of wildlife can withstand the rigors of such a harsh aquatic environment. In western Canada, the American Dipper is totally at home in rapids and beneath waterfalls, and the Harlequin Duck thrives in torrential streams. In eastern Canada, the animals which have mastered waterfalls and rapids are mainly invertebrates (most notably black fly larvae) and certain fish, of which the Atlantic Salmon is the most familiar and legendary.

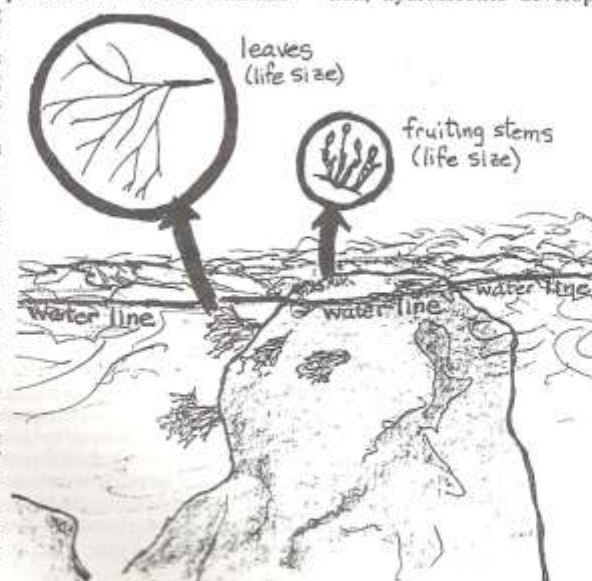
Not to be outdone, the plant kingdom has its champion too. The Riverweed or Threadfoot, *Podostemum ceratophyllum*, is an easily overlooked inhabitant of white-water habitats in eastern North America. It is considered to be rare or endangered throughout much of its range. In New Brunswick, the Riverweed is known only from the Shogomoc Stream (a tributary of the Saint John River located between Meductic and Pokiok) and from the Miramichi River near Quarryville. A historic station on the Eel River near Woodstock was probably destroyed by inundation after the Mactaquac dam was built.

The Riverweed is well adapted to its ecological niche. The plants are tightly anchored to the tops and sides of rocks by fleshy disks and thus can withstand the force of rushing water. Vine-like structures can sometimes be seen creeping along the rock surface between anchor sites. The leaves are green and very fine, occurring in clumps resembling algae and adapted to flowing in the current. The flowering and fruiting stalks are very short and often occur on the tops of rocks that become partially exposed when water levels drop in the summer. Apparently the plant is capable of vegetative reproduction from plant fragments which may be dispersed by flowing water.

It is difficult to find Riverweed unless water levels are low. Even in such conditions, one must often wade deeply into the water or leap from rock to rock in order to gain access to the plant's habitat. Be careful. These rocks can be very slippery and the current can be dangerous. Check rapidly flowing rocky stretches of rivers and large streams and areas below waterfalls, especially where the water is exposed to full sunlight. The flowering and fruiting stems are often found on rocks that may be submerged or partially exposed to the air, while the vegetative portions seem to persist only where the rocks are continuously covered by water. The leaves are fine and branching and the seed capsules are distinctive (see illustration). The plants seem to vary considerably in their appearance from site to site, stimulating a lot of controversy among taxonomists.

A few questions concerning Riverweed's lifestyle still puzzle me. Does the plant become established further upstream? If so, how does it do it? Are the seeds carried upstream by Spotted Sandpipers? Are plant fragments transported by some other animal species? How does pollination occur? How does a young plant first anchor itself to a rock in the rapidly flowing water? Much remains to be learned about this rare plant.

Hopefully this write-up has given you a new perspective on rapids and waterfalls. Apart from the scenic beauty of rushing and tumbling watercourses, the Riverweed is another important reason why such habitats must be protected from water pollution, siltation, hydroelectric development, and flooding or changes in water flow caused by dam construction. We must take care to safeguard white-water habitat to ensure the preservation of this fascinating and secretive wildlife species.



**1 Author's Reminder:
PLANTS ARE
WILDLIFE TOO!**

Acadian Flycatcher—Moucherolle vert—a New Bird for New Brunswick

Stuart Tingley

On Sunday, May 10, 1992, Connie Colpitts, Ron Steeves and I were returning home from an unsuccessful expedition to Lamèque and Miscou in search of Boreal Owl. A cold front had passed through overnight and the day was sunny and cool with a brisk northwest wind blowing.

Around noon we were driving through the community of Four Roads, between Inkerman and Tracadie, when a small bird flew across the road in front of the car. There was nothing particularly striking about the bird, and 99 times out of 100 it wouldn't have warranted more than a casual glance as you sped on your way. But since we had been seeing so few birds all day, and I happened to notice where it landed, Ron decided to stop the car and back up so we could take a look.

The bird had landed on a small twig a couple of feet off the ground near the edge of the woods and I quickly got my binoculars on it. I immediately recognized it as a smallish flycatcher and almost automatically called Eastern Phoebe. After all it was only the 10th of May, we had seen a phoebe nearby the previous day, and the only other realistic possibility at that date would be Least Flycatcher, which this bird clearly wasn't because of its larger size, much heavier bill, peaked head, and very long primary projection (the distance the longest primaries extend beyond the tertials and secondaries on the folded wing).

As my view of the bird improved and it flew to a perch in full sunlight, alarm bells started going off. First of all, the bird had very striking wingbars. Out the window went Eastern Phoebe. The bird also had a narrow but indistinct yellowish eye-ring, and pale spot between the eye and bill. It was clearly an Empidonax flycatcher and the combination of features mentioned earlier readily eliminated Least Flycatcher. All the remaining possibilities seemed exciting considering the date. I knew we were dealing with a remarkably unseasonal, if not extralimital, flycatcher.

While all this was mulling around in my head the most striking feature of the bird became very apparent. The colour of the upperparts was an incredible, almost emerald, green. This beautiful colour is never

approached by Least, Alder, or Willow Flycatcher and in my experience is reserved for only two species—Yellow-bellied and Acadian. One glance at the underparts clearly eliminated Yellow-bellied and I then knew that we were dealing with New Brunswick's first Acadian Flycatcher, *Empidonax virens*.



We spent the next 45 minutes studying the bird with binoculars and telescopes while it was flycatching from mowed alders along the roadside, often in full sunlight and sometimes closer than 10 metres. It did not make any sound during this time. I was able to take a series of photographs with a 300-mm lens which show most of the features described below.

Overall, the most striking features were its unique, almost emerald green upperpart colour, large size, "pewee-esque" shape, broad, conspicuous off-white wingbars, and very long primary projection (about 3/4 as long as the exposed tertials). Other features noted in the field were: narrow but distinct yellowish eye-ring; conspicuous pale loreal spot; large broad-based bill with entire lower mandible fleshy-orange; green of upperparts extended up over the crown and onto the face below the eye, then became pale green and blended into a whitish-gray throat; narrow olive wash across upper breast; centre of breast and belly whitish; pale lemon-yellow wash along flanks which seemed to extend to undertail coverts.

As May 10 was Mother's Day, and mothers were waiting at home, we had to move on by 1 p.m. I was able to contact Hilaire and Rose-Aline Chiasson in Lamèque who in turn alerted many members of the Club des Naturalistes de la Péninsule Acadienne. I was delighted to learn that up to twenty club members were able to see the bird during the course of the afternoon and that by using tapes they had induced it to sing "a perfect Acadian Flycatcher song." The bird was last seen around 7 p.m. that evening and could not be relocated on subsequent days.

I have considerable experience with eastern Empidonax flycatchers, particularly Least, Alder, and Yellow-bellied. I have also studied Willows on a number of occasions and have seen Acadians three times, in Texas. The features demonstrated by this flycatcher and by all the Acadians I have seen are, I feel, wholly distinctive of this species. Given good viewing conditions I feel this species can usually be identified in the field by anyone with extensive experience with the genus.

1991 Year's Lists

Stuart Tingley's tally of 259 species of birds observed in New Brunswick during 1991—very likely the most ever—was helped considerably by his work as a birding tour leader. He notes, however, that he missed several regularly occurring species and also some vagrants that were seen by lots of other people. He thinks that more than 285 species would have been possible had he made a serious effort at a "big year." Brian Dalzell, who limited his activities mainly to the Grand Manan Archipelago, found an impressive 240 species during the year.

Un colibri se blesse à une fenêtre

Monique Caron

Cet incident est survenu l'été dernier (1991) alors que j'étais au chalet avec des membres de ma famille. C'était un dimanche chaud et ensoleillé du mois d'août lorsqu'en avant-midi, deux Colibri à gorge rubis sont venus se heurter contre une fenêtre. Suite à cette collision l'un d'eux reprit aussitôt son envol. Je retrouvai le deuxième gisant dans une boîte à fleurs suspendue sous la fenêtre. Couché sur le dos et les yeux clos, l'oiseau était secoué de tremblements convulsifs. Mon époux me suggéra de préparer une boîte afin d'y déposer la pauvre victime qui était vraisemblablement sous l'influence d'un choc.

Pendant que je m'affairais à trouver le matériel nécessaire, le petit Colibri réussit tant bien que mal à voler jusqu'au sapin qui se trouvait à quelques pieds de là. Il s'accrocha à une branche et se laissa suspendre à la verticale c'est-à-dire tête première. Ce voyant, nous avons cru bon de le laisser ainsi tout en abandonnant l'idée de le mettre dans la boîte préparée à son intention.

L'oiseau blessé est demeuré dans cette position pour environ trois minutes. Puis, il est revenu s'installer dans le contenant à fleurs. De nouveau, il fut repris de frémissements et ses ailes se hérissaient. À ce moment nous avons pensé que l'oiseau ne pourrait survivre à ce choc. Je couvris son corps d'un linge, ce qui parut le calmer. Quelques instants plus tard les tremblements diminuèrent peu à peu.

C'est alors que le Colibri sursauta et ouvrit les yeux. Complètement remis de cet accident, il s'envola pour aller se percher dans un arbre non loin. On le vit par la suite se gaver de nectar à l'abreuvoir et visiter les fleurs du jardin.

Cette expérience m'a permis de mieux comprendre l'instinct de survie présent chez ces petits volatiles lors d'épreuves ou d'incidents similaires.



The Photography Expedition

Harvey MacLeod

Well now, fancy this... Saturday has come again. There are lots of things you could do. The garden needs some attention; there's that leaking tap in the basement, the leg on the kitchen table that should be tightened, and you can always do some painting. Maybe the sum of those things means you should go looking for birds.

Particularly if you're good at finding and identifying them, but have only recently become a bird photographer. Maybe it's a good day to photograph some birds. So what's around today?

Well—how about reports of a Rufous-sided Towhee and Northern Cardinal within easy photographing distance at a feeder in Fredericton? You could drive up there from the Kennebecasis Valley where you live, get your photographs and be back in time for supper. And there wouldn't be time to do any of those other jobs. Perfect!

And so he did.

The birds were where they were advertised—at the feeder of the city engineer, Don Gibson, in Fredericton. Our man dug his new portable blind out of the trunk of the car, checked his camera and settled down to wait on the Gibson driveway. It took a couple of hours but the birds did what they should and the photos were made. He packed up his equipment, loaded it back into the car and went home.

What he didn't know was that while he was watching the birds, the neighbours were watching him.

"What is going on here?" they wondered. This man crouching in their neighbourhood, trying to hide himself behind that thing. And all hung about with spy-glasses and cameras.

In some parts of the world you'd immediately think he was an urban terrorist. We haven't come to that yet in New Brunswick, but we do know a peeping tom when we see one.

That's what was said to the Fredericton City Police. And that's what the police wanted to know about when they showed up at Don Gibson's door. It happened as our man, all oblivious, motored happily back to Saint John with the towhee and cardinal images safe in his camera.

Well, Don Gibson was able to explain himself and his intruder to the police. In fact, one of them was something of a birder himself and was more susceptible to Mr. Gibson's explanations than your average policeman. So they went away happy, no doubt smiling to themselves.

All-in-all it was a pleasant morning fuss in Fredericton and just because of a few bird photographs.

And the name of the innocent who caused the fuss?

Would "Jim Wilson" mean anything to you?



Field Trips

The Great Annual Amphibian Migration¹

John Brownlie

"Hallelujah, it's raining!" I'm sure that's what most Moncton Naturalists were saying on Saturday, May 9, when they awoke to the sound of warm showers. The two inches of snow that fell on Alma on the 6th had brought forth a much different exclamation from me, but the next two days were sunny and warm. A few bats were out and yellow Coltsfoot beamed from the south-facing slopes. When I woke up to the pitter-patter of raindrops Saturday morning, I had a good feeling in my bones.

Nelson Poirier also had these sensations. "I don't want to go very far away if tonight's the night." He was right. At 8:30 Saturday evening, about 30 naturalists gathered in a light drizzle at the Gorge Road-Mountain Road intersection. From kids just 3 years old, to university kids and on up to us older kids, all had come equipped with boots, rain-jackets, flashlights and lots of curiosity. Allan Gregoire led us to one of his favourite spots: a pond and cattail marsh near Valhalla Estates.

Thirty beams of light pierced the murky waters, searching for yellow spots moving amongst the cattails—there was nothing.

The Spring Peepers were calling from across the pond, and soon we could see peeper bellies and throats pulsing with every "PE-E-EP." A couple of "spring pulsing peepers" were captured for a closer look. Most of us were surprised at the small size of a peeper in the hand compared to the loud sound of one in the cattails.

A few large dark green leeches undulated gracefully in the shallows. We picked one up to see the row of red dots down her back, bordered on each side by a row of black dots. Her light peach-coloured stomach contrasted beautifully with a dark green back. Denis Doucet saw a smaller light yellow species of leech, and Rachelle Leger told how leeches are used by doctors to remove excess blood after certain surgical operations.

Large predaceous diving beetles swam under the water while water spiders (*Dolomedes* sp.) tip-toed across the surface. Then...

"We've got a green one!"

Our first salamander was a Red-spotted Newt, similar in colour to the leech but with a yellowish stomach. Newts live in the water as adults, while Yellow-spotted and Blue-spotted Salamanders spend only two weeks in the water each spring, before returning to their terrestrial habitat in the woodlands.

"We've got some over here!"

In a much smaller, isolated cattail pond we found four Yellow-spotted Salamanders. One individual was captured so she could tickle the curious minds of young and old as we all reached out to have her walk across our palms.

Then, from the other end of the pond came news of a third species, a Blue-spotted Salamander. She

unconcernedly walked across the dike in front of Diane and Philippe Allain, no doubt on her way to the breeding pond, and was promptly caught for a closer look. This is one of New Brunswick's less common salamanders.

Wood Frogs and Leopard Frogs were not very abundant. Several individuals of each species could be heard in the marsh. No spermatophores nor egg masses were observed, suggesting that these amphibians were the vanguard of the breeding population. No doubt, after we left the pond at 10:30, the salamanders were just beginning to party.

It was a wonderful night. As a few of us stood silently in the warm drizzling rain, listening to frogs calling from the marsh, Nelson summed up our feelings. "How lucky we are in Moncton. Except for a few lights and the sound of cars on the wet pavement, we could very well be far off in a wilderness."

And, if only we can steer baseball fields and housing developments away from Halls Creek Marsh, life in Moncton would be even more wonderful.



Friends of Daly Point

A Bathurst group, The Friends of Daly Point Reserve, is busy conducting programs at the reserve. The first winter activity took place on Sunday, March 8, when 21 enthusiasts strapped on snowshoes for a 2 1/2-hour hike. Ron Gauthier provided comments on various trees, shrubs and mosses. Chickadees and nuthatches were very vociferous and a Ruffed Grouse gave everyone a good chance to see him before flying off into the bush.

Scheduled spring activities included stargazing, photography, marine biology, coastal walk, warblers, and spring sights and sounds.

Daly Point Reserve, situated in East Bathurst on Caron Drive, 1 km from Bridge Street, is a must for visiting naturalists. The reserve was established by a stewardship agreement between Brunswick Mining and Smelting and the Dept. of Natural Resources and Energy. In 1991, over 14,000 people walked the trails. In 1992, two new trails, the White Pine Path and the Coastal Path, were added to the Woodland, Saltmarsh and Field trails. — Mary Gauthier

¹ Reprinted from the June 1992 Newsletter of the Moncton Naturalists' Club.

Book Reviews

Grand Manan Birds: A Checklist with Occurrence Graphs and a Site Guide. By Brian Dalzell, 1991. Grand Manan Tourism Association. 56 p. \$4.00 at Grand Manan Museum (Available by mail for \$4.75 from: Grand Manan Tourism Association, P.O. Box 193, North Head, Grand Manan, N.B. E0G 2M0)

Reviewed by Peter Pearce

This well-turned-out booklet represents the third edition of the author's checklist, first published in 1984 and revamped by him in 1985. It is a far more ambitious document than its predecessors, neatly summarizing much of what is known about the bird life of the Grand Manan archipelago.

Following introductory material, there is a fascinating thumbnail sketch of the history of bird study in the islands. The booklet opens naturally and conveniently at a centrefold presenting a useful, coded map to accompany descriptions of thirty of the best birding spots on Grand Manan Island and elsewhere in the archipelago, as well as Machias Seal Island.

A wealth of information is presented in a series of bar graphs, making up nearly one-half of the booklet, which indicate the season(s) of occurrence and relative abundance of the 324 species recorded since 1970. Painstaking research must have gone into the preparation of that section. Inevitably, there are a few omissions. One notes, for example, the curious absence of Brewer's Blackbird and the failure to recognize Orchard Oriole as a casual fall migrant. A word on acceptance criteria would have been helpful in understanding why, for instance, Cory's Shearwater and Sooty Tern were included but South Polar Skua and Painted Bunting were relegated to hypothetical status. Fourteen additional species noted before 1970, as well as hypotheticals, introductions, exotics, and extinct species are all treated separately. The 342 (343¹) confirmed species constitute over 90% of the total known for the province at large, doubtless a reflection of the propensity of the islands to attract both avian strays and bird students.

Grand Manan Birds will be a valuable companion in the field—its concluding quarter presents a checklist with plenty of space for recording observations in a number of different ways suggested by the author. Measuring about 18 x 10 cm, it slips easily into the pocket, and is protected by a stiff card cover. The checklist is quite up-to-date, including as it does Royal Tern and Sandwich Tern, brought in by Hurricane "Bob" in August of the year of publication.

Grand Manan is a rather special place for the New Brunswick birdwatcher and visitor alike. To learn about its bird life and to facilitate record keeping, this document is definitely one to have.



¹ Ipswich Sparrow is noted as a sub-species but was evidently included in the species tally.

Atlantic Fishes of Canada. By W.B. Scott and M.G. Scott, 1988. University of Toronto Press. 731 p. ISSN 0706-6503. (Canadian Bulletin of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences No. 219). \$60.

Reviewed by Rudy Stoeck

If you have on your book shelf a copy of *Freshwater Fishes of Canada* or the still popular *Freshwater Fishes of Eastern Canada* then you are familiar with the writings of W.B. Scott. Dr. Scott and colleague and wife Mildred Scott have produced a completely rewritten reference that replaces the long out-of-print *Fishes of the Atlantic Coast of Canada* by Leim and Scott. Much of their writing was done at the Huntsman Marine Science Centre in St. Andrews.

Atlantic Fishes of Canada is concerned with the biology, distribution and economics of fishes occurring off the Canadian Atlantic coast from Cape Chidley, Labrador, south to the international boundary with the U.S. and extending out approximately to the 1000-fathom depth contour.

The major portion of the text deals with the fish species accounts but there is an introductory section that discusses the Atlantic coast fisheries in the last 25 years and the oceanography of the region. The accounts for each species cover the biology, distribution, relation to man, description and systematic notes; they include some fish that are anadromous and hence found in fresh water.

The five major categories of fishes covered in this book are jawless fish, sharks, rays, chimaeras and bony fish. The biology of each species includes items such as habitat, reproduction, growth, food, predation, competition, parasites and diseases. Each account includes an illustration and/or a black and white photograph of the fish and for some, a distribution map. There are 23 color plates of a variety of marine species. A lengthy section (154 pages) devoted to checklists, identification keys, glossary, references and such is a valuable inclusion.

Atlantic Fishes of Canada is an excellent reference on marine fishes that will be of interest to the serious naturalist. While it is easy to read, certain parts of the text, such as the fish descriptions, will require the use of the ample glossary. A few minor annoyances crop up in this otherwise well-written presentation. Most distribution maps, the few tables and some, but not all, of the black and white photographs are not captioned. For some there is adequate explanation or reference made in the text but not for all. For example, the illustration on page 18 of a beached Basking Shark (of sorts) needs a caption (what is it?)—it is only mentioned in the text on the following page. Two photographs, on pages 126 (a Chinook Salmon head) and 141 (three Brook Trout) need captions since they appear redundant (why are they there and what do they show?).

This book is a welcome addition for those of us fortunate to live in the Maritimes, surrounded on many shores by salt water, and where marine fisheries are an integral part of the economy.



Federation News

1992 Annual Meeting Weekend: The Bigger Picture

Ron Fournier

It was obvious to everyone who attended the 1992 Annual Meeting in Campbellton that a lot of time, energy, and loving care had been put into organizing the gathering. From the salmon banquet to the island outings, one could feel pride from within, as well as emanating from others at being a New Brunswicker hosted by fellow New Brunswickers, in a setting as rich in history as in natural heritage. Many thanks to Ann Lavoie and the Restigouche Naturalists' Club!

From our lovely bus driver, who accompanied us on the island (she must've wondered about some of us characters), to the fellow who got us to jump from boat to boat to shore, the locals made us feel most welcome and at home in a very short time. The outing to Heron Island was accompanied by sunshine and a gradually warming breeze. With lunches, binoculars, and well-honed curiosity we set out behind our "fearless leaders," Alan Madden and Jim Goltz.

When I think back about that day, images appear in my mind as slides from a carousel. Some pictures are a bit sinister: a dying tree suspended by its roots at the top of a low cliff, the latest victim of erosion; or trees too well acquainted with cormorant droppings and looking like the aftermath of Chernobyl! Turning inland, one finds vestiges of human habitation that are being reclaimed by nature. Given a chance, time and the elements will cooperate to reclaim most of the garbage left by unthinking humans.

Accompanied by the distant music of cormorant calls and the odd songbird, we followed our leaders through grasses, bushes, and woods. A multitude of plants were identified for us. More images pop out of memory's carousel: a lady finds green sponges on the beach and we see several small brittle-stars within them; a man finds animal scat in the grass and speculations fly about which critter left it (Jim advised us to be careful when handling this telltale waste: humans can possibly expose themselves to diseases.); Jim captures a butterfly, holds it inside a special transparent container for only a minute so that we can study it, and then releases it back to its environment, unharmed and free to pursue its destiny!

For the novice naturalist such as myself, it was like having the benefit of a walking encyclopedia. What a wonderful feeling it was for me, an environmentalist, to get better acquainted with our natural heritage, a heritage which we fight hard to preserve from environmental threats. If only our political and business leaders would take the time to experience the same outing. If only they could see the loving care with which Jim Goltz held that butterfly!

I am very grateful to my wife, Elizabeth, who stayed with our daughter, allowing me to have this wonderful experience, but I wish they could have been with me to share it too.

By the time we stopped to have lunch, we had split into two groups. What beauty and tranquillity we soaked in as we ate, legs dangling over the side of a low cliff, looking out over the Baie des Chaleurs. The wind in the bushes added soft background music to interesting conversations and friendly chiding. As we made our way back, we separated even more, as many of us wanted to commune more privately with this island, perhaps discovering that this is what's it's all about: humans getting back in touch with nature, in touch with themselves and with the Creator of it all.

We sailed back looking forward to the evening's banquet. The bus was filled with the buzz of conversation and a warm glow left by the sunshine, the wind, the friendly company, and most of all, the memory of an island where one can go and take a look at the bigger picture.

After a delicious banquet, comparable to the one at Lamèque in 1987, and a successfully captained annual meeting we retired to review the day in our minds.

The next morning, I joined a group heading up the Restigouche River for a close look at the Tide Head islands, courtesy of the kindness of local "river people" who generously volunteered their time, canoes, boating skills and experience. There were more fiddleheads there than you could shake a five-gallon pail at. Again, benefiting from the knowledge of Jim Goltz, Leo Martin and others, we made our way around, identifying plants, birds, and tracks. Nelson Poirier sat in the front in our canoe, myself in the middle "for ballast", Annette Murray from Ottawa behind me, and our captain, Ron, at the rudder.

What a wonderful experience it was to travel up this mighty river, in the company of fellow nature lovers, spread amongst more than half a dozen 26-foot canoes, like latter-day voyageurs. More pictures come out, clear though not always in order: our small flotilla fighting the current; a quiet stop in a side channel while Nelson Poirier identifies a bird; a Pileated Woodpecker's home high in a dead tree; a hybrid trillium resulting from the proximity of two closely related species, Nodding Trillium and Red Trillium; stuffing some wild leek in my pockets to make a soup later.

On the way back from this fantastic outing, I got a ride in the same vehicle as Peter Pearce and Jim Goltz. Taking a long drive anywhere with the two of them, listening to their friendly conversations on topics relating to nature, would be like a caveman enjoying the exhilarating experience of stereo headphones for the first time! What a treat for novices such as me!

I wish to end with a quote evoked by the experiences of that weekend:



"The green earth sends her incense up
From many a mountain shrine;
From folded leaf and dewy cup
She pours her sacred wine."

— John Greenleaf Whittier

I cannot help but believe that if we were able to bring out more people to take part in experiences such as we shared that weekend, we would find that they too would come to appreciate nature and to help in its preservation.

Un aperçu d'un plus grand tableau

Ronald Fournier

Tous ceux qui se sont rendus à l'assemblée générale annuelle de la Fédération, à Campbellton, ont été en mesure de bien goûter l'hospitalité locale. En effet, les organisateurs de notre AGA pour 1992 n'ont rien épargné pour assurer des sorties intéressantes en plus d'un banquet magnifique. Nous devons une fière chandelle à Ann Lavoie et à son groupe pour un accueil si chaleureux dans cette région riche autant dans son histoire que dans son patrimoine naturel.

La charmante dame qui nous transporta en autobus pour l'excursion sur l'île aux hérons devait se demander de quels êtres étranges elle avait hérité! Elle nous accompagna tout de même sur l'île, et, comme le reste du groupe, fit connaissance avec notre capitaine intéressant qui nous fit passer de quai à bateau à petit bateau à grève. Ces gens nous ont vite fait sentir chez-nous. Notre excursion sur cette île fut graduellement accompagnée de soleil et d'une délicieuse brise. Avec nos instruments de rapprochement préférés, nos goûters, ainsi que notre curiosité habituelle, nous sommes partis à la découverte, derrière notre Jacques Cartier et Samuel Champlain de la nature, Alan Madden et Jim Goltz.

Étant du type visuel, mes souvenirs de cette excursion me reviennent plutôt comme des diapositives dans le carrousel de ma mémoire. Les premières photos sont surprenantes de par leurs aspects un peu sinistres. Un arbre mort est retenu, la tête en bas, par une faible racine, qui le retient dans une pose finale, victime de l'érosion sur le rebord d'une falaise. Des centaines d'arbres secs mais encore debout, témoins silencieux d'un surcroît d'affection de la part des cormorans, nous semblent à prime abord, être les reliques d'un cauchemar nucléaire. Cependant, dès que nous pénétrons dans l'île, c'est le contraire. Ici la nature est en train de reconquérir les derniers vestiges de la présence des hommes sur son territoire. Évidemment, il y a encore quelques ordures qui ne rendent pas l'âme facilement!

Une musique d'arrière-plan, composée d'un mélange de cris de cormorans, du chant plus discret de petits oiseaux, du bruit lointain des vagues, ainsi que la douce brise à travers les buissons, accompagne donc notre progression lente. On s'arrête souvent pour identifier soit un nid de souris dans l'herbe, soit une plante rare, soit un buisson qui nous raconte ses débâ-

ires avec les vents et les hivers. Pour un novice comme moi, la découverte est rehaussée des explications de notre guide. Ça m'impressionne toujours de voir combien on peut découvrir dans un milieu comme cette île, qui pour bien d'autres, ne semble plus contenir de vie, ni profit, ni intérêt. Une dame trouve des éponges sur la grève, un homme trouve du fumier de prédateur, les naturalistes fourmillent par petits groupes. Jim nous met en garde de toucher directement le fumier d'animaux, même sauvages, parce qu'il y a toujours danger de ramasser des organismes microscopiques néfastes.

Pendant la randonnée, une multitude de plantes sont identifiées pour nous par notre encyclopédie ambulante, l'ami Goltz. Pour moi, étant de ceux sérieusement impliqués dans le mouvement écologique pour la sauvegarde de l'environnement, il est merveilleux d'avoir l'occasion de faire meilleure connaissance avec les sujets mêmes de ce royaume que l'on s'acharne à protéger. Nous devons dépenser tellement de temps et d'énergie à promouvoir les changements nécessaires afin d'éviter les effets néfastes des pluies acides tout comme ceux de la folie nucléaire.

Si seulement nos politiciens prenaient la peine de venir participer à ce genre d'activité! Si seulement les gros patrons avarés se payaient le temps de refaire connaissance avec l'écosystème même qui leur permet de respirer et qu'ils sont en train de piller et de gaspiller! Si seulement ils voyaient avec quel respect le Dr. Goltz traite le papillon qu'il a capturé, avec quel soin il le place dans un récipient transparent pour qu'on le regarde, avec quel amour pour la vie il le remet en liberté, libre de continuer son rendez-vous avec la destinée! Mille mercis à mon épouse, Elizabeth, qui me remplaça pour garder notre petite fille, ce qui me permit de vivre cette expérience. J'espère qu'elles auront aussi l'occasion de goûter ce genre d'expérience.

Lorsqu'il fut temps de s'arrêter pour le lunch, nous étions séparés en deux groupes. Notre repas fut rehaussé par la beauté et la tranquillité de l'endroit. Certains se balançaient les jambes sur le bord de la falaise tout en regardant plus au loin sur la Baie des Chaleurs. Lors de notre retour vers le lieu d'embarquement, les découvertes continuèrent mais, cette fois, le rythme semblait atténué par une certaine nostalgie qui planait en quelque sorte au-dessus de l'île. Pour le naturaliste, peut-être que le "retour aux sources" se fait plus rapidement, dès qu'ils sont immergés à nouveau dans le milieu naturel. De plus en plus, on s'éparpilla, tout comme si le besoin d'une communion individuelle avec le milieu prenait le dessus. C'était beau à voir, ces gens qui semblaient retrouver une partie d'eux-mêmes, tout en reprenant contact avec l'ordre naturel des choses, et par extension, avec le Créateur même de cet ordre naturel.

Pendant le retour, on sentait les gens heureux, encore plus chaleureux. La marche, le grand air, l'amitié qui résulte des intérêts communs; tout cela rapprochait les gens qui parlaient déjà du banquet au saumon. À sa façon, chacun rangeait déjà dans sa mémoire les souvenirs d'un autre lieu possédant

encore un peu de sa magie naturelle et où l'âme inquiète peut aller se recueillir et contempler le grand tableau de l'univers.

Le banquet comme tel fut magnifique, témoignage, s'il en fut un, que les gens de notre province savent bien faire les choses. Pour ceux qui n'étaient pas là, il m'est inutile d'essayer de vous transmettre le goût délicieux du saumon, le service courtois des gens, ni même l'humour suscité par le conte des tribulations de Peter Pearce, toujours en quête de l'oiseau rare, peu importe son "poste" d'observation!

Suite à une réunion d'affaires bien dirigée, on alla se reposer tout en contemplant les expériences de la journée. Le lendemain matin, je me joignis cette fois au groupe d'excursion en canot sur la Restigouche. Le tout commença par un examen intéressant de la flore sur les îles de Tide Head. Une des espèces qui était l'objet de beaucoup d'attention à ce moment-là était la fougère, et je peux vous assurer qu'il n'y avait pas seulement des naturalistes sur l'île ce jour-là. En plus de Jim Goltz, Léo Martin était là lui aussi et nous aidait à identifier la flore locale, l'occasionnel oiseau, et les quelques empreintes laissées par des animaux de passages.

Dans mon canot, il y avait Nelson Poirier en avant, moi même dans le milieu, étant donné la gravité de la chose, et derrière moi Annette, venue d'Ottawa pour l'occasion. Notre capitaine, Ron, était assis sur la poupe, avec le regard lointain du navigateur d'expérience. Ce fut une expérience sensationnelle que de remonter le courant de cette grande rivière en compagnie d'une demi-douzaine de canots, comme des coureurs-des-bois motorisés, en quête d'aventure. Encore une fois, je dois dire que Ann Lavoie mérite une autre plume à son chapeau pour une excursion réussie!

D'autres diapositives mentales me reviennent: notre petite flotte attaquant le courant: un parcours au ralenti dans des chenaux plus calmes, glissant lentement dans notre gondole canadienne comme dans une Venise verdoyante; au passage, Nelson Poirier identifie des oiseaux par leurs chants; un Grand Pic se cache dans son haut nid. Sur l'île où l'on fit halte pour le dîner, on trouva par exemple, une trille plutôt rare, résultat hybride de deux espèces proches. J'eus également l'occasion de goûter aux poireaux sauvages et d'en rapporter pour la cuisson.

Sur le chemin du retour, j'eus le bonheur de prendre passage dans la même camionnette que Jim Goltz et Peter Pearce. C'est toujours exaltant pour un novice de faire chemin commun avec des experts. Occasion d'être toute oreille, croyez-moi! Après une fin de semaine pareille, je ne peux pas faire autrement que de croire que si nous réussissions à faire vivre une telle expérience à un plus grand nombre de gens, nous aurions l'agréable surprise de voir nos rangs augmenter et nos luttes pour la sauvegarde de l'environnement en seraient d'autant plus faciles. Même entre nous, naturalistes, il y a plus de spectateurs passifs devant le défilé des espèces en danger, qu'il y a de participants dans le mouvement pour la protection de ces espèces mêmes qu'ils adorent étudier.

Response to Reader Survey

In March 1992 a readership survey was sent to 60 Federation members seeking their comments about the *N.B. Naturalist / Le Naturaliste du N.-B.* Twenty-nine persons (6 principally French-speaking, 23 English-speaking) responded; one other sent a single comment.

Sending a questionnaire to a selected group of members proved to be an excellent idea. It brought many good suggestions as well as some offers of help. We are indebted to all who sent comments and are gratified by the nice things that were said about the magazine. We are surprised that the "blast" about our schedule was not as big as we expected, but then all the respondents signed their names.

Some of the points covered by the survey were¹:

Do you read it all? 79% of respondents said they read most or all of the contents, and one added "numerous times." One even checks "the inside front cover to see if there are changes in club representatives, etc."

Things you'd like to see more of: One enthusiastic member said "What I'd like to see more of is everything and what I'd like to see less of is nothing."

The principal areas suggested for more emphasis were animals other than birds (41%), e.g., insects, invertebrates, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, fishes, and marine life; natural areas (38%), such as descriptions of unique/special/favourite natural areas, guides to natural areas, and how we intend to protect natural areas; plants and wildflowers (21%), "Hal Hinds should write a column for each issue"; club news (21%), particularly reports on field trips that are special in some way, and on projects; conservation problems and programs (17%).

Three anglophones and one francophone would like more French material, up to about 10% of the magazine.

Other respondents referred to fossils, historical aspects relating to nature and naturalists, classic field-naturalist articles reporting on amateur field work, Federation projects, mushrooms, "Nature News", book reviews, nature activities, ecology, naturalist's experiences in foreign lands, humour, announcements of coming events, the biology of birds and mammals, reports on "phenomena", how-to photography articles, a series of articles on animal intelligence, a series on prominent naturalists, past and present, and features on young naturalists.

A bird enthusiast said "I'd make it 100% birds but we don't have the population to support it." Another suggestion was that we should reprint articles from other provinces, especially the Atlantic region, and ask members to send in newspaper clippings that might be of interest to others.

Less of: Most people omitted this section, or said they were quite satisfied, but 21% made a point of saying that there is nothing they want to see less of.

Three people suggested reducing the coverage of

¹ Not everyone answered each question, so if 70% said they liked something, it doesn't mean that 30% didn't like it, more likely that 30% didn't make any comments.

birds. Another, who is mainly interested in birds, said a small decrease to make room for other things would be OK. One reader each suggested reducing reprints from other publications, articles that are too scientific, and untranslated French.

Christmas Bird Count: Almost everyone who commented is happy with the annual Christmas Bird Count reports. 59% said it's important to list all the participants' names because it acknowledges their important contribution to the project. The same proportion said they like the way the material is presented, but one person finds the tabular report less interesting than write-ups by area, which he believes would be read by more people. Two people would like to have a longer discussion of the results, perhaps including graphs or population density maps.

Nature News received favourable comments from 69%; two of them want to see more of the same; two always read it first. 14% would like to see more variety covered (i.e. subjects other than birds).

Illustrations: 55% said they like the drawings we have been using. Of the 41% who said they would like to see photographs included as well, half were strongly in favour, while the rest qualified their support with comments that they must be of good quality, well-reproduced, not too expensive, and of significance (nature or people). On the other hand, 28% prefer drawings and are cool on photos for our kind of publication. Two persons asked that we include more maps to help people know where places are.

Layout and Format: Be unique, distinctive, and don't copy others were frequently mentioned in these areas. On the whole, readers find that the layout is easy to follow and read, and the sketches break up the text nicely and add variety. One person noted that we do a great job of utilizing the space, but the overall appearance is somewhat unprofessional; another asked that we totally redesign the cover, because it's too amateurish, and suggested that a name such as *New Brunswick Nature* would have more appeal.

79% said they are satisfied with the current format and commented: it suits the publication well; retain the stiff cover, colour coded to season; don't get too fancy, the main aim should be communication. One person said the format is fine, but suggested using thinner stock for the cover so it isn't always popping out of your hand, and that coated stock would allow using a cover photo.

Four people suggested other formats they really like: a 6 x 9-inch size, such as *N.S. Birds*; something like *Nature Canada* "but one must be realistic"; and, facetiously, *Playboy* (it's a "wildlife" magazine!)

Frequency: We had invited readers to "give us a blast" about our irregular publishing schedule, and they did, but in a restrained manner. Almost everybody acknowledged that this is a problem, the weakest feature of the magazine. But, one added "it is such a pleasant surprise when it finally arrives."

Cost: Several respondents stressed the importance of the magazine as the main contact for most members, the only one for some. They feel it is a high priority, more than anything else binding the Federation together and presenting a positive image.



Some were reluctant to comment on cost because of their lack of understanding of the financial affairs of the Federation. 62% supported spending the largest portion of membership fees on production and distribution of the magazine, but one member suggested using only a quarter of the fees.

Two people stressed that we should continue with recycled paper despite its higher cost; others suggested seeking advertising to bring in more money for the publication, although one added that we would need an ad manager to do it effectively. It was also suggested that we find a sponsor for the magazine, organize fund-raising for other activities of the Federation, and establish an endowment fund to cover the gap between ordinary income and expenses. One person enclosed \$20 to help with costs (Bless you!).

Stirrett Prize: 48% favoured eliminating the \$50 George Stirrett Prize for the best article published in each volume of the magazine, because it doesn't stimulate more articles, the best educators refrain from giving awards, and everyone should get a prize for writing. Some suggested we find another way to commemorate Stirrett and also W.A. Squires, and that the funds be used for conservation / environmental protection.

34% favoured modifying the prize in various ways, such as making all contributors eligible (board of directors and their families are ineligible); giving it to the most promising young writer; setting up an independent judging panel; having voting by the readership; awarding it every 2 or 3 years; and making it for illustrations too.

Some of these favoured strictly non-financial awards, such as a letter of merit for any particularly good work, and a "best of the best" award, a plaque, certificate, or framed and suitably inscribed copy of one of the best covers presented at the annual meeting. On the other hand, one said that all authors should get a few bucks.

Others suggested a student writing contest on nature, in English and French with the winners to be published in the magazine, or opening the prize to all original writing on New Brunswick natural history in any publication.

Volunteers: Eighteen persons volunteered to write articles, and most listed possible topics, which hopefully you will see in print over the next couple of years. Eight computer owners volunteered to help type articles. Some people said they like to draw, but have no talent. Five, however, are talented enough to help us with drawings. Others said they could assist with selection and reproduction of photos, proof-reading, editing, delivery, translation, and mailing.

What will Come of this?

The Editorial Committee met March 28 to discuss the magazine, the reader survey, and the printing costs of alternative formats. The committee agreed with three main points indicated by the survey:

1. the importance of the magazine as the main contact with members
2. approval of the present format and a desire to maintain it on as good quality recycled paper stock as we can afford
3. that a major portion of Federation funds be committed to the magazine.

The Committee recommended that the Board of Directors approve spending \$3750 (about 75% of membership fees) for printing and mailing four issues of Volume 19, that a Publication Fund to support the magazine be established to accept donations from members or sponsors, and that the Stirrett Prize be suspended after Volume 18 and referred to a committee for study, along with the subject of other possible awards.

Changes in our desktop publishing equipment make it somewhat easier to produce the magazine than it was. A few authors have submitted their articles on computer diskettes which is of great assistance. The other people who've volunteered to help with typing, drawings, etc. will all assist in attaining a more regular publishing schedule. Tentative deadlines have been established in June, September, December and March, the next one of which will be stated in each magazine. But it will take us a while to catch up again. Major problems with Volume 19 result from conflicts with several other projects in which the editors are heavily involved.

To help increase coverage of subjects other than birds, Jim Goltz will act as coordinator for articles on botany and natural areas, and we are seeking a volunteer to be the coordinator for Federation and club news.

In response to a request to reinstitute a table of contents, the inside front cover was redesigned for the April issue. It was suggested that we prepare a 20-year index for libraries and interested members. As a result, we are looking for a volunteer to index Volumes 8 through 13. (Volumes 1-7 are already indexed and Volumes 14-18 can readily be indexed from our computer files.)

The committee accepted Stuart Tingley as photo editor and approved experimentation to see if we can obtain good photo reproduction quality.

In addition, all the suggestions made will be borne in mind as each issue is prepared. We'd be pleased to have ideas and volunteer help from anyone who didn't receive a questionnaire. A more detailed summary of the survey results is available on request.

— David Christie and Mary Majka



Nature News

Spring 1992

David Christie



Although "groundhogs" are reputed to venture from their burrows on February 2 to get a sense of how long the winter will last, a **Woodchuck** sniffing the breeze at Fort Howe, Saint John, Mar. 24 (DSC & MM) was appearing on a more likely date for New Brunswick's climate. Oh yes, he did see his shadow, and sometimes it seemed like the winter was lasting six more weeks (or longer). Indeed, Brian Dalzell commented that at Grand Manan three times as much snow fell in April as from January through March!

Birds

The large numbers of waterbirds that migrate along our coast in spring include a lot of **Common Loons**, for example, over 100 per hour flying NE past Le Goulet May 7 (SIT) and 275 per hour east past The Whistle, GM, May 10 (DB), when up to 25 **Red-throated Loons** per hour were also migrating. Small numbers of Common Loons were still passing Grand Manan May 18-25 (SIT).

An extended flock of about 2000 **Common Eider** migrated up Shepody Bay at Harvey, Albert Co., Apr. 7 (Lars Larsen) and 1000 were resting on the bay at Waterside Apr. 10 (DSC). Inland there were a very large flock at Fredericton in mid-April (450-DUCK) and singles at St-Hilaire Apr. 23 (SB) and Edmundston Apr. 28 (ML). There are also major flights of **scoters** along our coast, for example: 5000+ (mostly **Surf** and **Black**) seen migrating up the Bay of Fundy from the Grand Manan ferry off Blacks Harbour Apr. 23 (BED) and at least 100,000 flying NE along the Gulf coast of the Acadian Peninsula all day long on May 7 (mostly Surf, 10-20% Black, virtually no **White-winged**—SIT).

Several thousand **Northern Gannets** flew N past Le Goulet May 7 (SIT). The earliest had been found at Val-Comeau Mar. 22 (Jean-Yves Paulin). About 30 were seen near Machias Seal Island May 21 (Peter Wilcox).

A **Horned Grebe** at Val-Comeau May 1 and 2 was the first spring record for the Acadian Peninsula since the local club was formed (RD). The last six of the wintering population at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy were at Long Pond Bay, GM, May 3 (BED). **Red-necked Grebes** were more widespread on the Acadian Peninsula than in 1991, with several in the Tracadie-Tabusintac area during the first week of May (RD). More than 50, at various locations on Grand Manan, Mar. 29 indicated some movement (BED); several were still there May 24 (SIT).

It was a quiet spring for southern herons. The only **Snowy Egrets** were two at Great Pond, GM, May 16 (DRG; one stayed till the end of the month—*fide* BED) and one at Saints Rest Marsh, Saint John, May 19 (CLJ). There were 2 **Cattle Egrets** at Pt. Sapin for

several days from May 10 (Normand Daigle *et al.*) and one at Quispamsis, May 26 (JGW).

Only two **Snow Geese** (or perhaps the same one twice) were reported, at Oromocto Island Apr. 17 (JE *et al.*), and Jemseg-McGowans Corner Apr. 25-26 (450-DUCK).

The small numbers of wintering **Brant** at Grand Manan are greatly augmented by migrants in early March. There were about 5000 off Castalia Mar. 15 (BED), 3000 in Grand Harbour Apr. 17 (DSC & Majkas) and May 19 (SIT), and 2000 at White Head Island May 23 (SIT). The last 1500 at Grand Harbour disappeared over the night of May 26-27 (Wendy Dathan). In the north they appeared at Inch Arran Pt., Dalhousie Mar. 25 (65—Mike Lushington) and Tracadie Mar. 28 (GB & Émile Ferron). Inland one was at Oromocto Island Apr. 9 (JE *et al.*) and a tame one at Fredericton Apr. 11-13 (DRG).

As each spring, some European ducks were reported: the **Eurasian** subspecies of **Green-winged Teal** at Saints Rest Apr. 8 (CLJ) and Mouth of Keswick Apr. 17 (Beverley Schneider *et al.*), stayed till about end of the month), and **Eurasian Wigeon** at Hartts Island and Silverwood, above Fredericton, May 15 and 21 (pair—Don Fowler), Rivière-du-Portage May 21 and Inkerman Jun. 1 and 3 (RD).

Both **Northern Shoveler** and **Gadwall** were again present in fairly good numbers on the Acadian Peninsula, where they were rare just a few years ago (RD). Shoveler arrivals were reported at Gagetown Mar. 29 (Shirley Sloat); Courtenay Bay Apr. 14 (male—CLJ); St-Basile Apr. 26 (2—ML); St-Hilaire Apr. 26 (SB); and Évangéline, near Inkerman Apr. 30 (MD). Gadwall were first seen at Saints Rest Mar. 29 (2—DRG), Jemseg Apr. 13 (3—Pat Kehoe), and Wishart Pt. Apr. 30 (RD).

Lesser Scaup were noted at Grand Harbour Mar. 29 (AS), Sheila Apr. 11 (MD), and Jemseg in mid-April (pair—450-DUCK), as well as later at several sewage lagoons from Saint John to Shippagan (v.o.).

There were three reports of the rare **King Eider**, in the wintering areas at St. Andrews and Letete Passage Mar. 21 (450-DUCK) and during migration at Rivière-du-Portage May 2 (RD). Up to 4 **Oldsquaws** were inland at Edmundston and St-Basile Apr. 24 to May 1 (v.o.).

An injured **Barrow's Goldeneye** was picked up at Shediak Bridge Mar. 22 (Gilles Daigle), and migrants were reported at Fredericton in early April (450-DUCK), Penobsquis Apr. 5 (2—RJW) and Waterside Apr. 15 (1—RJW).

Two **Ruddy Ducks** were found in the northeast, a male at the Shippagan sewage lagoon May 24 (RD) and a female at the Tracadie lagoon Jun. 2-4 (RD), as well as 3 at Sackville Jun. 6 (DLM).

Imagine looking out your kitchen window some morning and seeing a hulking **Turkey Vulture** perched on the roof of your bird feeder! That was the surprise that greeted Elaine and Harry Eagles, at their home east of Alma, Apr. 17. Until at least Apr. 26 the vulture

was a regular visitor, coming once or twice a day to feed on butcher shop waste placed near their garden shed, and the bird remained around Alma until at least May 20 (Donald Z. Cormier). Probably it was the same one seen at Fundy Nat'l Park HQ Apr. 15 (*vide* RJW), but less likely the one at Harvey Apr. 14 (John & Merna Inman). Elsewhere, one was seen at Fredericton and Oromocto Island before Apr. 27 (450-DUCK) and two soared high over Marble Cove, Saint John, May 1 (DFS).

Bald Eagles were a highlight of the NBFN trip Mar. 21, when about 30, mostly immatures, were seen around salmon pens at Deer Island (450-DUCK). Near Kedgwick, an eagle feeding on a deer carcass in late winter was in the same area as one in 1991 (Pat Émond). The first spring report in the northeast was at Gaythorne, near Tabusintac, Apr. 29 (R&BR). A rare **Golden Eagle** was seen at Fredericton May 20 (Peter Pearce). A single **Cooper's Hawk** was seen well perched in an orchard at Douglas May 22 (Schneider).

The female **Peregrine Falcon** had rejoined its mate at the Saint John Harbour Bridge by Mar. 24, (Faith Hughes) and one was back at Alma Apr. 14 (RJW). In non-nesting areas, an early adult was photographed at Halls Creek, Moncton, on the weekend of Mar. 7-8 (*vide* Ron Leger), one was circling there May 14 (SIT & Ron Steeves). One reported around Bon Ami Rocks at Dalhousie from about Apr. 10 was seen catching a goldeneye (*vide* Lushington, who saw it on the 24th), and others were at Pont-Landry Apr. 26 (CNPA) and Miscou May 8 (RD & RR).

An **American Coot** was seen at Inkerman May 3-7 (GB & RD), and two were at the Sackville Waterfowl Park May 6 (Denis Doucet). Much rarer, but increasingly frequent here, were two **Sandhill Cranes** circling over Miscou Centre and feeding in a bog May 7 (SIT & YC) and another at Quaco Head, near St. Martins May 8 (*vide* CLJ).

Boldly patterned Willets are regular breeders along Northumberland Strait but scarce elsewhere in the province. Robert Doiron commented on how strange it is that Willets are found frequently at Maisonneville, where as many as 20 have been seen in July and August, but seldom elsewhere on the Acadian Peninsula. The first Willet this spring, at Waterside from about Apr. 22 till May 1 (BC *et al.*), was followed by others at Castalia May 2 (AS), Ox Head, GM, May 3 (2—*vide* BED), Courtenay Bay May 1 or 3 (3—JGW), Maisonneville May 9 (MD), Val-Comeau May 14 (RD), and Kent Island, GM, (BED) and Le Goulet May 15 (GB).

Upland Sandpipers returning to their few breeding areas were seen near Bradford Cove Pond, GM, Apr. 18 ("1 blew by"—DB), Scotchtown Apr. 25 (John Kearney), Salisbury Apr. 30 (Doucet), Woodwards Cove, GM, May 4 (AS), and Boishébert, near St-Isidore, May 7 (Donald Cormier).

Two **Long-billed Dowitchers** at the Sackville Waterfowl Park and the Tantramar River dam May 12 were very unusual this far



east in the spring. Stuart Tingley was able to study these breeding-plumaged birds at close range and also heard the species' distinctive call. Fewer **Wilson's Phalaropes** were reported than in recent springs, only at St-Louis-de-Kent May 13 (DD) and Shippagan May 24 (2—RD).

Most unusual gull of the spring was a **Laughing Gull** at Courtenay Bay May 15 (JGW). Its European counterpart, the **Common Black-headed Gull**, is more numerous: Courtenay Bay Apr. 18 (Moir Campbell); Saint John West sewage lagoon May 3 (JE), Shediac Bridge May 6 (2 ad.—SIT *et al.*), Petit-Tracadie May 7-13 (RD); Lamèque May 7 (SIT & YC), and Tracadie May 26 (JGW). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were seen at Lincoln Apr. 24 (2—JE) and Lamèque May 7 (2—SIT & YC).



An exciting find was the discovery by Canadian Wildlife Service staff of a colony of 7-10 pairs of **Black-legged Kittiwakes** at South Wolf Island in The Wolves, an area where Peter Hicklin had noticed a few summering kittiwakes in the mid 1980s. This is the first known breeding record for the Bay of Fundy, and for New Brunswick.

A very small number of **Caspian Terns** are regular migrants through New Brunswick. This spring they were found at Red Head Marsh, Saint John, May 1 and 4 (2—Paul Clark), Courtenay Bay May 3 (1—JE), and Pointe à Bouleau, near Tracadie, May 23 (Roland Chiasson & Gertrude St-Pierre).

The winter's **Boreal Owl** records were followed by one calling regularly during March and April on its breeding grounds at Lamèque Island (Rose-Aline & Hilaire Chiasson *et al.*), one killed at a window in St-Basile Mar. 18 (Louise-Anne Lajoie), and one calling at Campobello Island Apr. 1 (Nancy Neilsen), a location where nesting might sometimes occur as it once did at Grand Manan.

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** was reported at Edmundston Mar. 3 (Marielle & Armand Chouinard). This is the farthest north winter record in New Brunswick.

New Brunswick's first well-documented **Acadian Flycatcher** was found May 10 at Four Roads, near Inkerman, by Stuart Tingley, Connie Colpitts, and Ron Steeves (see article, p. 20). A more difficult-to-miss rarity was a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** at Newcastle Creek, near Minto, May 9-11 (Ann & Louis Boucher *et al.*). A different-looking swallow perched on the wires by Jean-Yves Paulin's house at Tracadie May 14 may have been New Brunswick's first **Cave Swallow**; unfortunately the possibility was not realized until after the bird had disappeared.

A male **Northern Wheatear**, in breeding plumage, reported on the Tantramar Marsh Apr. 6 (Bruce MacWhirter & John Wilson), was very early judging from the few spring records for New England and the Maritimes, and from the migration schedule of Greenland and Baffin Island Wheatears through the British Isles. Perhaps it was caught up in the winds

that brought a few Barn Swallows here in the first week of April.

There may have been more, but the only reports of **Brown Thrasher** to come my way were from the Grand Manan archipelago, individuals at Kent Island May 4 (Nathaniel Wheelwright), Bancroft Pt. May 17-19 (BED), and Pettes Cove May 25 (SIT & MNC). **Mockingbirds**, on the other hand, were seen in many parts of the province.

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Caraquet May 19 (MD) was the only rare warbler seen. A female **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at Micmac Campground, FNP, May 18, had a yellow throat and a yellow wash across its breast, which had us (DSC & DJC) puzzling for a while about the possibility of a western "Audubon's" or a hybrid, but all its other features suggested a typical eastern "Myrtle" Warbler.

Two **Summer Tanagers** overshot their breeding range and reached New Brunswick: a female was visiting a bird feeder at Bancroft Pt. May 18-21 (BED & Halton Dalzell) and another was seen at Fredericton May 18 (Jeremy Forster).

Many fewer **Indigo Buntings** were found than in 1991: Seal Cove about May 4-13 (P&CR); Hammond River May 22 (JGW); North Head May 23 (*vide* BED), Edmundston May 24 (Colette & Bert Lavoie); Petit-Pokemouche May 27 (Edith Robichaud).

A female **Dickcissel** at Jack Tars Cove, near Seal Cove, May 17 (BED) was one of very few spring records here. Three **Field Sparrows** were found: at Alma May 1 (DJC), Kouchibouguac Nat'l Park May 19 (DD), and Southwest Head, GM, May 24 (DLM & DRG). A western subspecies, "**Pink-sided Junco**," visited our feeder at Mary's Pt. Apr. 26 (DSC & MM).

In March the meadowlark wintering at the Canada Dept. of Agriculture research station in Fredericton since Jan. 2 (PAP) was discovered to be a **Western Meadowlark** (JE *et al.*). This rarity was studied and photographed at close range, and finally heard singing the typical western-type song Mar. 21 (Jim Goltz). It made its last appearance on the morning of Mar. 29.

As **House Finch** populations become better established in southern New Brunswick, more and more are appearing in the north. A male wintered at Kedgwick and a pair were seen there in late March (*vide* Pat Émond). Other northern records were of lone birds at Edmundston Apr. 3 and 4 (Monique Caron), Bas-Caraquet Apr. 6 (Rosita Lanteigne), and Balmoral Apr. 12 (Lushington).

Cold, and sometimes snowy, weather during April and much of May delayed both the return of summer birds (with a few exceptions) and the departure of winter ones.

The last of a good flight of **Rough-legged Hawks** on the Acadian Peninsula were a dark bird at Inkerman May 20 and a light one at Shippagan May 30 (both RD). Also in May were one in the Jemseg area on the 3rd (MNC) and one at St-Hilaire May 16 (BA). A very late **Snowy Owl** at Deep Cove, GM, May 9 (Peter Wilcox) unfortunately was found shot May 13 or 14 (Maude Hunter). Some stayed even later

along the east coast, at Kouchibouguac National Park near the end of May (mobbed by a Piping Plover—450-DUCK), Le Goulet May 26-27 (JGW & SIT), Inkerman May 29 to June 3 (RD), and Miscou May 30-31 (RD).

Bohemian Waxwings, numerous in March, soon dwindled in numbers and were last reported at Edmundston May 1-2 (4 came to eat cherries picked and frozen in 1991—Gisèle Thibodeau). **Northern Shrikes** were last reported at St-Hilaire Apr. 12 (SB), Grand Manan Airport Apr. 16 (BED); Le Goulet May 7 (1—SIT), and Miscou Island May 7-8 (RD & RR).

Am. Tree Sparrows were last reported Apr. 12 at Grand Harbour (AS), Apr. 29 at Mary's Pt. (DSC), and Apr. 30 at St-Hilaire (SB). The last **Lapland Longspurs** were at Baie-du-Petit-Pokemouche Apr. 29 (male with 1000 **Snow Buntings**—RD); Inkerman Apr. 30 (4 with sev. **Snow Buntings**—RD). Other late **Snow Buntings** were at St-Hilaire Apr. 23 (SB) and Inkerman May 9 (35—SIT *et al.*).

Common Redpolls remained numerous into April, when 200 were still at Gisèle Thibodeau's feeder in Edmundston Apr. 10, and a flock at Rockwood Park, Saint John, Apr. 12 (Paul Mortimer). By mid-month they were definitely moving north as indicated by 1100, in flocks of 20-75, heading NW at Mary's Pt. between 8 and 9 a.m., Apr. 16 (DSC). The same morning Rob Walker noticed many small flocks flying NW over Route 114 near Waterside. A tardy individual was at Mary's Pt. May 2 (DSC). In addition to those mentioned in our last issue, **Hoary Redpolls** were recognized among the Commons at Tracadie Mar. 16 to Apr. 17 (male at feeder—Désanges Doiron *et al.*), Rivière-à-la-Truite, near St-Jacques, Mar. 22 (COM), and St-Hilaire Mar. 24 (BA).

We'll use fine print to squeeze in a selection of the arrival dates submitted. Through most of April and May most species were arriving about a week later than usual. Strong SW winds in the first week of April did bring in a few birds more expected in late April.

Double-crested Cormorant Saint John Apr. 8 (DFS), Sheila Apr. 11 (MD); Edmundston (Louis Morin) and St-Hilaire (SB) Apr. 24.

Great Blue Heron Mactaquac Mar. 28 (David Lounsbury); Wishart Pt. Mar. 29 (RL); Bayswater Apr. 2 (M&FW); Harvey Apr. 2 (Larsen); Castalia Apr. 4 (BED).

Canada Goose: Harvey Mar. 8 (2—Shirley Inman; 30 on Mar. 11); near Atholville Mar. 11 (2—Alan Madden); Oak Pt. Mar. 15 (18—A&JG); Fredericton Mar. 22 (100—Frank Goddard); Val-Comeau Apr. 4 (RD); St-Hilaire Apr. 11 (SB).

N. Pintail: Saints Rest Mar. 10 (CLJ); Castalia Mar. 17-25 (3—BED); Fredericton early April (450-DUCK); Sheila Apr. 4 (RD).

Blue-winged Teal: Castalia Apr. 4 (BED); Tracadie Apr. 17 (RD).

American Wigeon: Castalia Mar. 17 (BED); Saints Rest Mar. 29 (DRG); Nerepis Apr. 2 (2—A&JG); St-Hilaire Apr. 23 (SB).

Osprey Gagetown before Apr. 3 (Sloot); between Fredericton and Bayswater Apr. 4 (M&FW); Sheila Apr. 18 (RD).

Broad-winged Hawk Petit-Paquetville Apr. 2 (R&BR); Ingalls Head Apr. 30 (*vide* BED); New Horton, near Harvey, May 3 (DSC); St-Hilaire May 9 (SB).

American Kestrel Sheffield Mar. 28 (DSC & MM); Lindsay Apr. 10 (A&DC); Petit-Pokemouche Apr. 16 (GB); St-Hilaire Apr. 18 (SB).

Sora Bell Marsh, Moncton, weekend of May 2-3 (2—450-DUCK); Miscou May 8 (RD & RR); Moulin Morneault May 19 (Danièle & Gisèle Thibodeau).

Black-bellied Plover Wishart Pt. Apr. 28-30 (1, very early—RD); Castalia May 2 (3—AS).

Piping Plover Waterside Apr. 25 (3—BC & Rick Elliott); Petit-Pokemouche Apr. 27 (MD); Long Pond Beach, GM, Apr. 30 (2—*vide* BED).

Killdeer Riverside-Albert Mar. 13 (Édouard Daigle); Mary's Pt. Mar. 19 (MM); Saints Rest Mar. 20 (Allen Gorham); Fredericton Mar. 22 (V. Anderson); Bancroft Pt. Mar. 26 (2—BED); Rivière à la Truite, near Tracadie, Mar. 27 (Jean-Yves Paulin); "hundreds" while paddling from Titusville to mouth of Hammond River Apr. 11 (Phil Withers & Don Cayo); St-Hilaire Apr. 11 (SB).

Spotted Sandpiper Miller Pond, GM, May 10 (AS); Six Roads May 12 (RD); Moncton area by May 13 (MNC meeting); St-Hilaire May 16 (SB).

Common Snipe Grand Harbour Apr. 10 (AS); St-Hilaire Apr. 11 (SB); Maces Bay Apr. 12 (2—MNC); Village Blanchard, near Caraquet, Apr. 15 (MD).

American Woodcock Hopewell Cape Mar. 12 (Édouard Daigle); Lorneville Mar. 14 (CLJ); Gardner Creek Mar. 16 (Bruce & Sherrie Bagnell); Shepody, near Riverside-Albert, Mar. 17 (DSC); Petit-Paquetville Apr. 10 (R&BR); Oakland Apr. 11 (A&DC).

Common Nighthawk Anchorage Prov'l Park, GM, May 20 (SIT); Bancroft Pt. May 26 (2—BED); Caraquet May 27 (RL).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird Petit-Paquetville (Manon, Rachel & Chantal Robichaud), Oakland (A&DC), & Park HQ, FNP (DSC), May 20; Saint John May 29 (DFS); St-Hilaire May 31 (SB).

Belted Kingfisher Castalia Mar. 25 (BED); Bayswater Apr. 5 (M&FW); Grand Harbour Apr. 16 (Gloria Hobbs); Pokemouche Apr. 25 (MD); St-Hilaire Apr. 29 (BA).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Oakland Apr. 18 (A&DC); Petit-Paquetville Apr. 28 (RR).

Northern Flicker Val-Comeau (Émile Ferron) and South Branch, near Penobscis (DSC), Apr. 10; Mary's Pt. Apr. 12 (DSC); Castalia Apr. 14 (*vide* BED); Oakland Apr. 25 (A&DC); Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska Apr. 29 (2—BA).

Eastern Wood-Pewee Eel Lake, GM, May 24 (SIT, MNC); Rivière-Verte May 28 (GeT).

Alder Flycatcher Shediac Bridge May 22 (SIT); Grand Manan Island (2—SIT, MNC), Caraquet (MD) and Oakland May 23 (A&DC); Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska May 30 (GeT).

Least Flycatcher Val-Doucet May 13 (MD); Oakland May 15 (A&DC); St-Hilaire May 16 (BA).

Eastern Kingbird Eel Lake, GM, May 10 (GMFN); Waterside May 15 (DSC); St-Hilaire May 16 (SB); Rang-St-Georges May 18 (RR); Florenceville May 21 (A&DC); 50-100 estimated on Grand Manan May 31 (BED).

Tree Swallow Bancroft Pt. Apr. 8 (2—BED); Fredericton & Jemseg many in mid-April (450-DUCK); St-Simon Apr. 19 (MD); Edmundston Apr. 26 (ML); Oakland Apr. 27 (A&DC).

Barn Swallow West Quanco Apr. 5 (Jim Goltz); Shediac Bridge Apr. 10 (2—YC & SIT); Bancroft Pt. Apr. 29 (BED); Saints Rest May 2-3 weekend (many—450-DUCK); Petit-Paquetville May 9 (RR); St-Hilaire May 10 (SB); Oakland May 16 (A&DC).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet Caraquet Apr. 25 (RL); Fredericton Apr. 25-26 weekend (450-DUCK); Oakland Apr. 27 (A&DC); Saint John Apr. 29 (DFS); Bancroft Pt. Apr. 30 (BED); St-Hilaire (SB) May 3.

Eastern Bluebird Daniels Marsh, near Riverside-Albert, Apr. 9 (DJC); Riverbank, near Stickney, Apr. 25 (A&DC); Four-Roads May 9 (1—SIT+); Charlo early May (Loretta Hamilton).

Hermit Thrush Bancroft Pt. Apr. 27 (10 after snow—BED); Grand Harbour (4—AS), Saint John (DFS) and Petit-Paquetville (RR) Apr. 29.

Wood Thrush Village Blanchard May 22 (MD); Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska May 28 (FL).

American Robin Oakland (A&DC), Harvey (3—DSC & MM) and Mary's Pt. (7—DSC) Mar. 26; Hacheyville, near St-Isidore, Apr. 2 (R&BR); St-Hilaire Apr. 11 (100—SB).

Cedar Waxwing Winterers in late March at South Bay (Grace Lee), Fredericton (David Lounsbury), and North Head (*vide* BED); migrants at Park HQ, FNP, May 23 (2—DSC); Caraquet May 30 (RL); Seal Cove (P&CR) and St-Hilaire (SB) May 31.

Solitary Vireo Penniac Apr. 21 (Dwayne Sabine); Maple Grove Rd., FNP, May 8 (DSC & DJC); Losier Sett. May 9 (RD & RR).

Red-eyed Vireo Oakland May 20 (A&DC); Village Blanchard, near Caraquet, May 21 (MD); East Branch Trail, FNP, May 27 (DJC); Bancroft Pt. May 29 (BED); St-Hilaire May 31 (SB).

Yellow Warbler Seal Cove May 6 (P&CR); Moncton area by May 13 (MNC meeting); Caraquet May 15 (MD); Anagance May 16 (SIT & DSC); Oakland (A&DC) and St-Hilaire May 18 (SB).

Yellow-rumped Warbler Bancroft Pt. Apr. 2 (BED); Grand Harbour, Apr. 10 (AS); Grand Manan more arrivals (BED) and Penniac (450-DUCK) Apr. 21; Harvey Apr. 23 (DSC & MM); Hillsborough Apr. 25 (2—Diane Allain); Lamberts Cove, Deer Island, Apr. 29 (Audrey Cline); Caraquet Apr. 30 (MD).

Palm Warbler Bancroft Pt. Apr. 22 (2—BED, many on Apr. 25 but none after the next day's snowfall (BED); Tabusintac Apr. 28 (Sabine Dietz); Grand Bay late April (450-DUCK).

American Redstart Landry Office, near Inkerman, May 13 (Donald St-Pierre); North Head May 19 (LM); Oakland (A&DC) and Pt. Wolfe, FNP (DSC), May 23; Saint John May 26 (DFS).

Common Yellowthroat Tabusintac May 2 (S. Dietz & R. Chasson); Anagance May 16 (2—SIT & DSC); Oakland May 26 (A&DC); Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska May 29 (sev.—FL).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak Oakland May 14 (A&DC); Mary's Pt. May 15 (DSC); Caraquet May 18 (MD); St-Hilaire May 21 (SB).

Chipping Sparrow Saint John Apr. 7 (DFS); Westfield Apr. 12 (Joelyn Steeves); Jack Tars Cove, GM, Apr. 28 (DB); Petit-Paquetville Apr. 29 (RR); Oakland (A&DC) and Mary's Pt. (6—DSC) Apr. 30.

Savannah Sparrow Saint John Apr. 6 (DFS); Bancroft Pt. Apr. 13 (BED); Mary's Pt. Apr. 22 (DSC & MM); Tracadie Apr. 29 (Désanges Doiron); St-Hilaire May 9 (SB).

Song Sparrow Wintering birds began singing in early March at Saint John, Grand Manan, Fredericton, and Deer Island. Probable migrants appeared at Gardner Creek (Bagnells) and Grand Harbour (2—AS) Mar. 13; Mary's Pt. Mar. 26 (DSC); Inkerman (André Robichaud), Saint John (DFS), and Bayswater (M&FW) Mar. 28; Saint John West Mar. 30 (same first date as in 1991—CLJ); Oakland Apr. 12 (A&DC); St-Hilaire Apr. 19 (SB).

White-crowned Sparrow Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska May 1 (FL); Kent Island May 4 (Chuck Huntington); Bancroft Pt. May 6-8 (BED); Petit-Paquetville May 9 (RR); St-Hilaire May 16 (BA).

Red-winged Blackbird Mary's Pt. Mar. 10 (DSC); St-Hilaire Mar. 11 (SB); Grand Harbour Mar. 13 (4—AS); Gardner Creek (Bagnells) and Deer Island (Audrey Cline) Mar. 15; Lindsay Mar. 24 (A&DC); Tracadie (Désanges Doiron) and Bayswater (M&FW) Mar. 27; Rivière-Verte & St-Basile Mar. 29 (COM).

Brown-headed Cowbird Brantville Mar. 29 (RL & GB); Mary's Pt. Mar. 31 (3—DSC); Oakland Apr. 5 (A&DC); Saint John Apr. 8 (DFS); St-Hilaire Apr. 9 (SB).

Amphibians and Flowers

Spring Peepers began to sing at Douglas Apr. 21 (Bev Schneider) and Mary's Point Apr. 30 (DSC).

Simon Bouchard was the only person to submit a list of wild-flower blooming dates. Other reports are gleaned from my own notes and from *The Razorbill*, the informative newsletter of the Grand Manan Field Naturalists.

As usual, **Coltsfoot** was the earliest flower, found blooming at West Saint John March 6 (Kit Graham). **Dandelion** flowers were found at Grand Harbour May 4 (*vide* BED), **Strawberry** blossoms at St-Hilaire May 14 (SB), and at North Head (LM) and Seal Cove May 19 (P&CR).

The early spring flowers of the hardwood forest are represented by **Spring Beauty** at Fundy Park May 8 (DSC & DJC); **Trout-Lily** at St-Hilaire May 17 (SB) and Fundy Park May 20; **Red Trillium** at St-Hilaire May 23 (SB) and Fundy Park May 26.

Purple Violets, probably *Viola septentrionalis*, were reported on Grand Manan at Deep Cove May 10 (Elaine Maker) and Jack Tars Cove May 16 (DB), in the northwest at St-Hilaire May 17 (SB) and at Fundy Park May 25 (DSC). **White Violets** were found at St-Hilaire May 14 (SB) and North Head May 19 (LM).

Shadbush or **Bilberry** (*Amelanchier* spp.)—our loveliest flowering shrubs—would have been blooming earlier in the lower Saint John valley, but I didn't see their flowers opening until May 16 at Penobsquis, while Simon Bouchard reported them at St-Hilaire May 18. At the cool Fundy coast, the low Bartram's Serviceberry was beginning to bloom in Fundy Park May 22, but the tall, bronze-leaved shrubs not till May 30 (DSC). Close behind the shadbushes in blooming is **Pin Cherry**, which was flowering at St-Hilaire May 18 (SB) and North Head May 22 (LM). Other flowering shrubs reported were **Fly Honeysuckle** at St-Hilaire May 14 (SB) and Fundy Park May 21 (DSC), and **Blueberries** at Deep Cove May 30 (Elaine Maker).

Abbreviations

A&DC, Aesel & David Campbell; A&JG, Allen & Janet Goham; AS, Andrew Sharkey; BA, Basil Arseneault; BC, Barbara Curlew; BED, Brian Dalzell; CLJ, Cecil Johnston; CNPA, Club des naturalistes de la Péninsule acadienne; COM, Club d'ornithologie du Madawaska; DB, Don Baldwin; DLM, David Myles; DFS, David Smith; DJC, David Clark; DRG, Don Gibson; DSC, David Christie, et al. and others; *vide*, according to; FL, Florida Lavoie; FNP, Fundy Nat'l Park; GB, Gérard Benoit; GEI, Georgette Thibodeau; GM, Grand Manan; JE, Jim Edsall; JGW, Jim Wilson; LM, Laurie Murison; M&FW, Mitzi & Frank Withers; MD, Marcel David; ML, Madeleine Lavoie; MM, Mary Majka; MNC, Moncton Naturalists' Club; NBN, N.B. Federation of Naturalists; P&CR, Peter & Carmen Roberts; R&RR, Roland & Bernice Robichaud; RD, Robert Doiron; RJW, Rob Walker; RL, Rosita Lantagne; RR, Roland Robichaud; SB, Simon Bouchard; SIT, Stuart Tingley; v.o., various observers; YC, Yves Cormier; 450-DUCK, NB Bird Information Line.

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