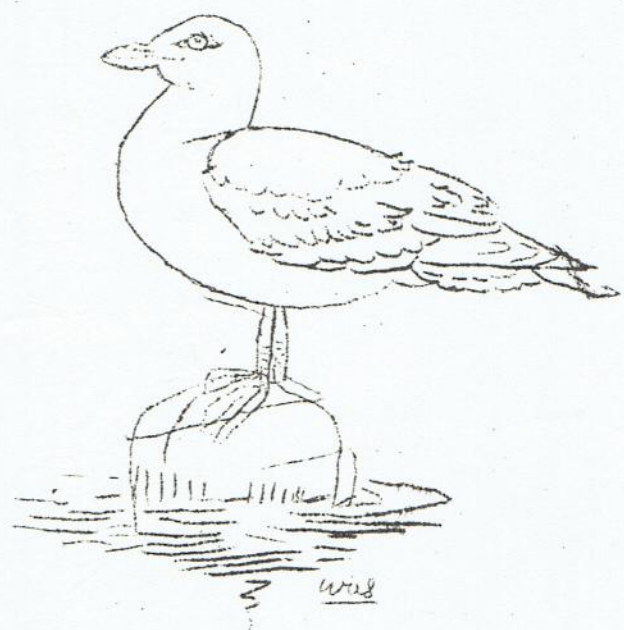


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NATURE NEWS.



Issued by
The Natural Science Department
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THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM
Saint John, N.B.

NATURE NEWS

Number 1.

VOLUME I

February 1950.

FOREWORD

This bulletin, as the number indicates, is a new venture and its purpose is twofold; first to bring together valuable phenological data and other information about any and all branches of natural science -- birds, flowers, insects, mammals, the weather, etc., -- in New Brunswick; and second to coordinate this information and pass it on to those who may be interested and at the same time to put it on record so that it may be available to students and research workers in the future. There are quite a few people in this province keenly interested in nature but probably not enough in any one place to maintain a successful naturalists' society. A provincial association might be a future possibility.

Readers are not obligated in any way but are requested to send in items of interest such as are recorded in the following pages. These will be edited and the most significant published as space permits. We would also like to have the names of persons who would be interested in receiving this bulletin or contributing to it.

Once any information is put in print, even mimeograph, it will always be available for anyone who wants to use it in the future. Your notebook may be destroyed but at least one copy of a bulletin is almost certain to be preserved.

W. A. Squires, Curator.

The unusual mildness of the present winter during December and January does not seem to have had any marked effect on the winter bird population according to reports received here. There are always transient species present one year and perhaps entirely absent the next nearly every winter producing a few very unusual reports. In this respect also the present winter has been quite normal.

The most surprising record received to date was a female Wood Duck brought to the Museum on December 3rd followed by a report of a male near Saint John on December 7th. Both were alive but seemed unable to fly and were a month later than any previous records in my files. In the second instance a flock of small ducks was seen which may have all been of this species.

Any authentic reports on the winter waterfowl population in the Bay of Fundy should be of special interest to observers living inland. American Golden-eyes (Whistlers) can be found at Saint John any day in winter and both American and Red-breasted Mergansers are frequently noted. The winter Gull flocks at Saint John are in thousands beyond counting, mostly Herring Gulls with perhaps thirty per cent of Black-backed Gulls and occasional individuals of the Glaucous and Iceland species. Up to the minute reports on other species of waterfowl would be welcomed.

There must have been a very large flight of Dovekies along our coast this winter. They are very seldom reported as far up the bay as Saint John but several have been found here this winter. Two were reported on November 20th and a live one was brought to the Museum from Brookville December 21st. Another strayed more than fifty miles from salt water and was killed at Sheffield November 24th.

The winter of 1949-50 has seen another great southern migration of Snowy Owls coinciding with the periodic decline of lemmings in the north. Farther west many hundreds have been reported from some localities but in New Brunswick my only records to date have been four seen recently in Saint John.

I saw a Pileated Woodpecker at Fredericton December 31st, my first personal record in two years. This is a resident bird reported occasionally from nearly all parts of the province where records have been kept with the exception of St. John county where it has never been reported.

White-breasted Nuthatches have ^{been} unusually common at Fredericton. I banded one in December and one with a band was seen more than a month later. Red-breasted Nuthatches, although usually common, have not been seen there this season.

The Meadowlark has always been considered a very rare bird with us but it may be increasing as there have been several 1949 reports. A poorly edited item in the "Audubon Field Notes" apparently means that George Boyer, Dominion Wildlife Officer, saw five pairs near Fredericton on July 5th. Melvin Moore, Fredericton, reports that three were seen near Mouth of Keswick in October and two at Barkers Point after a snowstorm in December, one of the latter being found dead on December 12th. It is now preserved in the Moore collection.

Evening Grosbeaks should be noted in many parts of the province this winter. I saw a flock of 15 or 20 at Fredericton on January 21st. This species appears nearly every winter and we are apt to forget that it is a newcomer migrating from the west and was unknown here before 1913. A few now remain and breed in the northern part of New Brunswick and Maine in summer being first reported near Tabusintac by Jack L. Wishart in 1940 or earlier. Miss Patience Barker saw young ones at Riley Brook on the Tobique River July 29, 1948.

Pine Grosbeaks are not seen in the south of the province nearly as often since the Starlings regularly destroy much of their winter food supply. They are seen occasionally in summer in the north of the province but are only late fall and winter visitors further south. I saw two at Fredericton October 21st and a small flock has been seen in the same locality nearly every day since then feeding on apples.

A male Junco which appeared at Fredericton January 21st when the temperature was 10°F below zero was seemingly as content as in the summertime.

Henrik Deichmann has seen several Rusty Blackbirds at East Saint John, 1 on January 26th and 4 on February 13th.

The Raven seems to have increased greatly in recent years. Formerly more or less restricted to the coastal areas it is now often seen in winter as far inland as Fredericton. I saw one there in December and see one or more at Saint John nearly every day.

The Eastern Panther is not in the news as often as it was a couple of years ago but it is still in New Brunswick. A guide in southern New Brunswick who had reported Panther tracks to the Game Division for many years finally saw one in his territory in the fall of 1949. It appeared on the road in front of his car. Another very definite meeting with a Panther was reported to Mr. Bruce Wright, Director of the Northeastern Wildlife Station, at Fredericton. Two men stopped their car within fifty feet of one on the Fredericton - Minto highway in July 1948 and watched it leap up the bank and disappear into the woods.

There is little to report on flowers at this season but in the regions where it occurs we should soon be on the watch for the first flowering of the Coltsfoot, (*Tussilago farfara*), it sometimes appears in March.

I am very anxious to determine whether the White Oak does actually occur in the province as a native. It has often been reported but I have recently examined trees in the Grand Lake region so reported and found them to be Bur Oak. The easiest way to tell the difference is by the acorn. The White Oak has a long acorn with a short cap while the cap on the Bur Oak covers most of the acorn and has a fringe of coarse hooks. The leaves of both are similar with rounded lobes. Our common oak is of course the Northern Red Oak with the lobes of the leaves ending in sharp points. There are also English and other introduced oaks set out in the province which must not be confused with our native species.

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NATURE NEWS

Number 2.

VOLUME I

April 1950.

FOREWORD

The response to the first number of this bulletin was most gratifying. It was sent at first only to those whom I knew to be definitely interested in birds, flowers, etc. and nearly twice as many copies were forwarded later to persons named by readers and to those who applied following an editorial in the local press. This issue is being mailed to all of these and to all members of the Museum as well.

Several readers have supplied information some of which has been used in this issue. General references to the occurrence of birds and flowers never have the same interest or use as reports giving the place seen, day of the month and other details.

For the present we are going to prepare one issue about every second month, five or six in the year. Data on the spring occurrence of birds, flowers, etc., should be in by May 29th for use in an early June number.

My thanks and your copy of this bulletin will have to be the only reply to most correspondence.

W. A. Squires, Curator.

Spring must surely be here, the first Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) was reported in bloom at Saint John on March 31st. This is an European weed with a yellow blossom much like a dandelion and as far as I know is found only at a few places about our seaports. It would be of interest to trace its spread inland. There have been a few spring records here in former years at least two weeks earlier than this.

The first Robins, Grackles, Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows and Juncos were a week to ten days late. Only the vanguard of the spring flocks appeared at Saint John and Fredericton before the snowy Easter weekend. The first Robin was reported at Saint John April 7th and residents fed large flocks of Fox and other Sparrows April 8th to 12th.

Those of us who watched in vain for Snow Buntings this past winter should be a little envious of George Boyer, Sackville, who saw at least 5,000 on the West Sackville marsh one day in December.

Winter Robins are not too unusual here but one seen at Browns Flats by Stanley Gorham on January 8th when the temperature was -12°F is the only report I have had this winter.

Henrik Deichmann of Moss Glenn saw a small white gull with black legs near Milledgeville on February 10th. This was evidently an Ivory Gull, an Arctic species which is very rarely seen here in winter. I saw one at Saint John December 21st, 1945.

A. M. Colwell saw 15 Snow Buntings at Saint John March 11, 1950, and I saw a flock of about 100 Redpolls swoop down on a weed patch at Fredericton March 1st.

Miss Willa MacCoubrey saw two Barrow's Goldeneyes at St. Andrews December 31st, 1949, and flocks up to forty in January 1950. Chamcook Bay near St. Andrews appears to be a concentration point for this rare species of duck as it is reported in this area every winter.

The Snowy Owls mentioned in the February number continue to be seen in the Saint John district from time to time. The most recent report is for April 4th the latest date in our records for this species in southern New Brunswick. This one may have been on its way north although it is believed that very few of the many thousands which come south in a flight year ever find their way back to the Arctic.

The spring bird migration has seemed to be very slow getting under way this year. The Horned Larks must have been moving in February or early March but they are seldom seen at Saint John and I have received no reports from other areas. Crows which were unusually scarce at Saint John began to increase in numbers early in March. H. Deichmann reported a flock of 25 at Fairville March 7th and I saw about the same number well inland at Blissville April 1st. They were mated and gathering nesting material at Fredericton April 8th.

Black Ducks are usually seen in winter in the Bay of Fundy. H. Deichmann saw 20 at East Saint John on February 13th and James Catt reported several at the mouth of the Digdequash River, Charlotte County, early in March.

Mr. Catt also saw two Woodcock at the outlet of Spruce Lake (west of Saint John) March 26th. The earliest date in our records is the 21st.

Several flocks of Canada Geese have been seen near Saint John and George Boyer reported 200-300 stopping over near Sackville on April 3rd.

The Gray Squirrel is at the northeastern limit of its range in New Brunswick. Miss May Armand, Jacksonville, reports, without date, that it has been seen at Hartland and Upper Woodstock which extends its known range slightly. We had one previous report from near Woodstock. Any records north or east of a line through Hartland, Macnaquac, Stanley, Jemseg, Rothesay and Petitcodiac would be welcome.

During the winter many saltwater fish are caught through the ice of the lower Kennebecasis River. Milledgeville and Drury Cove are favorite fishing spots. Geologically the Kennebecasis is a drowned river valley and the water is very deep, over 200 feet in places. While it is brackish at the surface it is quite salt at the bottom. Such typical sea fish as Cod, Tomcod and Pollock are caught as well as Smelt which are restricted to salt water at this season. The Lumpfish or Lump Sucker was a curiosity on the smelt lines this winter and a number of them were brought to the Museum for identification. Additional information and a collection of specimens of the fish found in our "inland sea" would be of scientific value.

Does anyone collect Amphibians — Toads, Tree Toads, Salamanders, Newts? Stanley Gorham, Browns Flats, has gathered a lot of information about the local species. Specimens are easy to collect and should be kept in 5% formalin with place and date on a penciled label.

We have at least one kind of Toad, one Tree Toad, six Frogs, four Salamanders, and one Newt. A few others may occur here but little is known about their distribution although they should be one of the easiest groups to study. Few people know that the common Toad is one of the loudest vocalists in the spring chorus. It goes to the streams and ponds to breed at this time. The tiny Tree Toad (*Hyla crucifer*), although it could sit comfortably on a 25-cent piece, also has a very loud voice being the source of one of the very earliest spring songs from the swamps and marshes. When in song its throat is inflated larger than its body. In late summer it is found in trees and bushes far removed from its spring habitat and its colour changes continually to blend with its surroundings.

I would like definite information about the occurrence of the Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) in the province. It blooms very early. I have some very ancient reports from Charlotte County. Personally I confused Skunk Cabbage with False Hellebore (*Veratrum viride*) for many years and I believe that others do the same because the latter is referred to in some localities as Wild Cabbage, Cow's Cabbage and even Skunk Cabbage. Both plants are found in damp swampy places, the False Hellebore being very common along streams in central New Brunswick where the great bunches of bright green leaves may be seen by mid-May.

NATURE NEWS.

Number 3

June 1950.

F O R E W A R D.

Although the primary purpose of this bulletin is to coordinate interest in nature throughout the province we were naturally very pleased at the interest shown by one lady who made herself an annual member of the Museum when requesting copies of "Nature News".

I have not received notes from as many readers as I had hoped for but some of the information which has been sent in is very important and deserves publication in a more permanent form.

The new form has been requested by readers for easier filing. The first two numbers should be clipped and pasted to match. If you are not saving your copies pass them on -- do not destroy them.

W. A. SQUIRES, CURATOR.

I have always hoped to see an Indigo Bunting and may see one alive yet. I examined two in the flesh this spring. Miss Willa MacCoubrey sent me one found at Grand Manan April 25th and reported one with Goldfinches near St. Andrews June 2nd and 3rd. A boy from Miss Vivien Fowler's class at Fairville brought another to the Museum on the 27th. This Bunting occurs casually in the south of the province. A bright blue bird reported to me near Fredericton in 1949 was probably this species.

Henrik Deichmann has reported a surprising variety of hawks at Moss Glen -- a Cooper's Hawk on April 7th, a Sparrow Hawk on the 10th, a Goshawk and a Marsh Hawk on the 11th, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk on the 12th. We must be very sure of the identifying marks before we name the Cooper's Hawk which is usually very scarce here. It is so similar to the Sharp-shinned that occasionally specimens in the hand are very difficult to distinguish.

Miss Janet Curry saw a pair of Evening Grosbeaks on her lawn at Andover May 25th. This is further evidence that this western bird which formerly was seen only in winter now remains in northern New Brunswick in summer. Miss Curry also reported a Pileated Woodpecker and a Catbird at Andover May 20th. This date for the Catbird compares very favourably with May 13th the earliest provincial date in my file.

On the height of land at the head of Green River in Restigouche County, Dr. R. F. Morris had noted only eight spring migrants by May 15th -- Fox, Song, Savannah, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows, Junco, Purple Finch and Robin. The Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker is common in this region.

Miss MacCoubrey found the Scoters remaining very late and in large flocks this spring in Chamcook Bay. All three species, Surf, White-winged and American were still there on May 24th and two Surf Scoters at Oven Head on June 5th. She also saw a flock of Northern Eiders off St. Andrews March 24th and a flock of American Eiders with one King Eider on May 11th.

If you saw the press note about the "25 pound Golden Eagle" which a game warden at Rusagornish killed with an axe "in self defence" it will interest you to know that it was only an 8 pound immature Bald Eagle. Our Bald Eagles at this season nearly all have come from the southern United States where they breed in winter. There has been an alarming decrease there and they should be protected in New Brunswick as they are in many other provinces and states. I understand that a fine of \$50.00 may be levied in Ontario for killing one.

Many observers confuse the early white blooms of the Shadbush (called Bilberry in southern N. B.) with the Bird Cherry. The Shadbush blossoms first and has much longer petals than a cherry. On May 22nd the Shadbush was in full bloom near Saint John while the Bird Cherry was just beginning to open.

Miss May Armand found the Blue Violet (*Viola cucullata*, our provincial flower) in bloom near Woodstock on May 3rd and reported White Violets, Purple Trilliums, Dutchman's Breeches, Spring Beauties, and Adder's Tongues May 7th. The Yellow Lady's Slipper and the Pink Lady's Slipper or Moccasin Flower along with its white form were just coming into bloom at Fredericton June 4th.

Plant growth on the southern coast starts early and keeps ahead of inland districts until well into May but by midsummer it is at least two weeks behind. Another year an interesting project would be to preserve blooming dates for a series of plants at several stations throughout the province.

Dr. Morris sent us a list of amphibians collected on the Green River-Kedgewick watershed. Most surprising was the discovery of the larger Tree Frog, *Hyla versicolor*, which, while common in the eastern U.S., has never so far as I am aware been found so far to the northeast. I only know of one previous very doubtful record for New Brunswick. The other amphibians are the ones to be expected there; Newt, Jefferson's Salamander, Spotted Salamander, Red-backed Salamander, American Toad, Spring Peeper (*Hyla crucifer*), Green Frog, Mink Frog, and Wood Frog.

Miss MacCoubrey saw her first House Wren May 28th. This Wren is seen and nests every year in the Fredericton area but as far as we know is very scarce elsewhere in the province.

Tent caterpillars are extremely abundant in the Saint John valley from Saint John to Woodstock. If there is any district where they are not abundant it might be worthy of note. Fungus disease was noted on them at Fredericton June 11th. Both Apple-tree and Forest varieties are common.

Here at the Museum on Douglas Avenue in Saint John we have become very familiar with the Double-crested Cormorant. The harbour below the Reversing Falls is in front of the Museum, the Saint John River with shallow Marble Cove is behind the building and the Cormorants keep passing continually during the daylight hours from mid-April (April 24, 1950) to the end of October, travelling from a steadily growing breeding colony on Manawagonish Island just outside of the Harbour to good fishing in Marble Cove or further up the river. There may well be breeding colonies up the river but I do not know of any. I have seen them at Hampton and Fredericton and one was reported at the mouth of the Tobique in 1947. To some observers they may be "Black Ducks", to others "Black Gulls", to fishermen "Shag", but their snake-like necks and hovering position as they sit on posts or rocks drying their wings will identify them as Cormorants and tufts of feathers on either side of the head give this species the name Double-crested.

NATURE NEWS

Number 4

September, 1950.

FOREWORD

I would like to have a larger proportion of the news in the next issue supplied by readers. The more of the province we are able to cover in each issue the more valuable the "News" will be to every one.

If some of our readers are particularly interested in plants they could supply notes on this branch of nature which has been rather neglected.

We expect to limit our 1950 issues to five numbers. Any news for the next number should be in by November 1st.

W. A. SQUIRES, CURATOR.

In New Brunswick the Purple Martin just about reaches the northeastern limit of its range and is generally uncommon except for isolated colonies. I knew there were plenty around Hampton but was pleasantly surprised to find it abundant with many houses occupied in the Jemseg to Young's Cove region on the southeast shore of Grand Lake on July 30th. On the same day I saw a flock of 29 across the lake at Princess Park. Only one of the latter group was in dark adult male plumage and some of the young were still being fed. Building more bird houses might increase the number of Martins although a bird house which I had was successfully occupied for two years and did not have occupants again in the next twenty years.

We have still more evidence that the Evening Grosbeaks are remaining throughout the summer in the north of the province. Mr. and Mrs. B. S. Moore report a flock of seven at Riley Brook, Victoria County, about July 7th and a female at Nictau Lake July 22nd.

They also reported a Killdeer with two young at Riley Brook, July 19th. Five years ago we had no breeding records of this species for this province. Since then young have been reported at St. Andrews, Jemseg, Bathurst and now Riley Brook.

The Sparrow Hawk is evidently quite common for a hawk. Although I had only seen two previous to 1946 I have seen more than any other species since then and have had numerous reports from others. Stanley Gorham reported it breeding at Brown's Flats this summer and I saw two at Grand Lake July 30th and one at Lawrence August 20th.

Bluebirds are rare enough here to report a flock of two adults and at least four young also seen near Lawrence, Charlotte County, on August 20th. These are the only ones I have seen this year although several were reported to me at Fredericton, one dead, about two weeks earlier.

The occurrence of the Eastern Panther in New Brunswick has been given enough publicity so that nearly everyone who sees one (and some who do not) reports it. Two visitors at the Museum recently reported seeing one on the roadside near McAdam at a distance of twenty or thirty feet. The local press also reported one seen a few days ago on the road near St. Martins.

A tourist who visited the Museum late in June had been thrilled to see a cow Moose with twin calves feeding alongside of the road two miles from Saint John at Coldbrook. Local people evidently were also thrilled for cars were lined up for half a mile watching them.

A lady brought a most objectionably smelling object to the Museum to be identified the other day - she had been unfortunate enough to find a Stinkhorn Fungus, (Phallus impudicus), close to her summer home. (After opening this package in my office I earnestly advise you never to take this plant indoors). Putrid meat is pleasant in comparison. The odour centres in the green slimy gleba which contains the spores and attracts insects to propagate the plant.

I have been much interested in watching Chimney Swifts at a large chimney on Carleton St. in Fredericton. Every evening that I have been there from July 15 to August 19 an immense number (5000 - 10000 at a guess) have been circling and entering this chimney. This species is reported occupying large chimneys during migration but I had no idea that they would use a chimney in this latitude for five or more continuous weeks. In 1947 I saw a similar multitude at the same chimney on June 7.

The southward migration of shore-birds is in full flight. It actually starts in mid-July. At St. Andrews on August 20th I saw several hundred Semi-palmated (Ring-necked) Plovers in mixed flocks with Semipalmated Sandpipers and Sanderlings. Many other species will be observed by those who frequent the beaches.

On August 13th most of the puddles and swamp holes in the York County woods had dried up but the Wood Frogs had changed from tadpoles to frogs in time and very tiny frogs less than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long were seen in many places.

In July I was able to confirm the report that there is a colony of Common Terns near the mouth of the Salmon River on Grand Lake. I saw the Terns there on several occasions. I have seen this species on the St. John River at McGinley's Ferry, York County, and at Evandale in Queens County.

Wm. Astle of Flushing, N. Y. banded 500 Gulls (Herring and Black-backed) on Manawagonish Island in July - about the tenth successive year.

A male Little Blue Heron in adult plumage, the first blue specimen from the mainland of New Brunswick, was collected at River Glade by H. W. Coates on August 12, 1950, in the same pond where he found an immature in white plumage on August 9, 1948. All the rarer and more southern herons are increasing under protection and may be expected in this province in increasing numbers.

Whether a country is suitable for settlement is often judged by the number of frost-free days. If 1950 were typical much of New Brunswick should be abandoned. The killing frost of June 12th which ruined the blueberry crop and even killed young maple trees was followed by another frost which froze ice in some places on August 7th - 55 frost-free days instead of a normal 113 days in the central and southern part of the province. Tomatoes were frozen at Renforth just outside of Saint John on the latter date where normally the average is 160 frost-free days.

NATURE NEWS

Number 5-6

November, 1950.

FOREWORD

This number completes the first year of Nature News. The next number is being planned for January or February. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have sent in letters of appreciation or contributed information about nature in their communities. I believe we have got together some useful information and with your continued cooperation we should lay the foundation for useful publications on several aspects of provincial wildlife.

In hundreds of communities in the United States and perhaps two dozen in Canada bird enthusiasts get together on some day in the last two weeks of December and make a Christmas bird count. Besides the recreation this can have a definite scientific value if continued in the same territory over a period of years. Many of these lists are published in the Audubon Magazine and the Canadian Field-Naturalist. Only three or four individuals have ever tried to report for New Brunswick and none regularly. There are several communities where I now know there are enough interested persons to make a real census. I would be glad to supply details for making a proper survey to anyone interested and in either Saint John or Fredericton would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to take part in a Christmas count.

W. A. SQUIRES, CURATOR.

For the first time in nearly ten years a plentiful supply of Mountain Ash (Rowan) berries remain on the trees around Saint John well into November. In all recent years great flocks of Starlings, often 5,000 or more, have arrived in September or early October and eaten every berry. Apparently food is so plentiful throughout the country that the Starlings have been very slow in forming their large flocks. These berries were an important source of winter food for Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, Robins, etc., before the Starlings became numerous. I well remember seeing a flock of Pine Grosbeaks feeding on the Mountain Ash within reach of the sidewalk at Saint John in December 1939.

Six Evening Grosbeaks which I saw at Fredericton November 17th is my earliest personal record but Miss MacCoubrey saw one at St. Andrews in October 1944. There were a number of Pine Siskins apparently flocking with the Evening Grosbeaks.

The greatest rarity reported this season was a Western or Arkansas Kingbird reported at St. Andrews by Miss MacCoubrey October 31st at which time it had been seen for about a week. This flycatcher was first reported in New Brunswick in 1937 and we now have five records from July to November all in Charlotte County. A rarity in itself is only of interest as a matter of record but this continuing occurrence may indicate an extension of range which will eventually bring this bird to New Brunswick regularly.

Miss Mary Foster reported a flock of nearly forty Redpolls at Kent Junction on the surprisingly early date of August 27th. These birds rarely reach southern New Brunswick before the middle of October. She thought they were Greater Redpolls and they may well have been but the species and subspecies of Redpolls are very difficult to separate. I found this out when a N. B. specimen in the Royal Ontario Museum which Dr. James Baillie and I both agreed was a Hoary Redpoll was identified by Ludlow Griscom of Cambridge, Mass., the North American authority on Redpolls, as a Greater

Redpoll. It was a very pale specimen of this subspecies. We still have no New Brunswick specimen of the Hoary Redpoll although many observers have been sure they have seen it here, and it should be found here.

We have two members of the Holly Family in New Brunswick. The commonest of these, Ilex verticillata, is often referred to as Scarlet Winterberry or Black Alder but I prefer Canada Holly. It should be called Holly because it is very closely related to the Christmas Holly which is also an Ilex. It drops its leaves and only the bright red berries persist in fall and winter in the swamps and along the fencerows. I have not found our other Holly which is usually called False or Mountain Holly nearly as common but it may be so in your locality. It also sheds its leaves in the fall and retains the scarlet berries. Both of these may be preserved as an interior decoration in winter by applying a thin coating of wax to the berries.

A museum naturalist encounters many strange objects and discovers surprising beliefs. A recent visitor brought in a small translucent pebble of quartz which he declared was a "lightning bolt" which had split a tree into splinters. He also informed me that these "lightning bolts" always accompanied lightning but were very rarely found as they nearly always went back up into the sky after they struck. I thought the thunderbolt of Olympian Jove was finally laid away when Benjamin Franklin flew his kite and discovered that lightning was electricity but apparently Jove still throws them in rural New Brunswick. At first I considered the possibility of a meteorite but as the story developed I discarded that and finally concluded that if the pebble really had been red hot it must have been heated by the lightning as it ran across the ground. When my visitor left he still had his "lightning bolt" and also, I am afraid, had a very poor opinion of my knowledge of lightning.

Talking to a man from Campobello Island recently I was informed that there is only one amphibian on that island, the Toad, and only two reptiles, two species of snakes instead of the five or six snakes on the neighboring mainland. There are no frogs at all. While these data are probably not quite accurate the account suggests a subject for an interesting piece of research. The birdlife on the islands at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy has been thoroughly studied and a paper published on that of Grand Manan but I am not aware of a publication on any of the other animal groups. A study of the animals on our large islands would be of interest especially if correlated with the geologist's idea of the age of the islands and data or theories to explain the occurrence of some species and the absence of others. It would make a good master's thesis for the right person. Bowdoin College may have done something of the sort from its station on Kent Island.

In response to my request in our 3rd number for information about the distribution of the European weed Coltsfoot (Tussilago farfara) Mrs. A. B. Williston informs me that it is common in the Newcastle district.

Mrs. Williston also mentioned that there used to be several colonies of Purple Martins at Newcastle but they were driven out of their houses or at least replaced by English Sparrows. I would like to hear more about the present or past occurrence of Martins in northeastern New Brunswick as this is about the northern limit of their breeding range.

Miss MacCoubrey reported a Hummingbird at St. Andrews on September 30th. I thought this was an all time late date until I found that W. H. Moore had seen one at Scotch Lake, York County, on October 15, 1905. These while being Ruby-throated Hummingbirds would be females or juvenile males lacking the ruby throat as the adult males leave by mid-August. The sexes differ so greatly that it is often hard to convince some people that we have only one species here.