

NATURE NEWS



Painted  
Trillium

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The Natural Science Department

of

THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM

Saint John, N. B.

NATURE NEWS

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Vol. IV

.....  
January 1953

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Number 1.  
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FOREWORD

This issue starts a new volume. There were five numbers in volume three. A proposed November-December number had to be omitted because we did not have enough reports, personal or from correspondents, to complete it. This bulletin is very largely dependent on its readers.

There has been one criticism - that we include too high a percentage of bird news. I recognize this and would be glad to include notes on plants, trees, forest insects, marine fishes, etc., etc., if correspondents would write them up for me.

As there are quite a number now on our mailing list who did not get a copy of the prospectus of our new book "Birds of New Brunswick" it is being enclosed with each copy of this issue.

W. A. Squires, Curator

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In the entrance hall of the National Museum in Ottawa there is, or at least there was three months ago, a very interesting display of meteorites. Featured is a meteorite which fell in Carleton County near Woodstock, N.B. no longer than three years ago if my information is correct. While we must congratulate the National Museum on acquiring this specimen we cannot help feeling that it should have stayed in this province as this Museum does not possess a meteorite known to have fallen within the limits of New Brunswick. You can always be of much assistance to your Museum whether it be this institution or one in your own community if you will notify it of any unusual find and, if you have the opportunity, urge that the items be offered to a museum.

Nearly all meteors that we see are tiny particles like grains of sand which burn up in the thin atmosphere far above the earth's surface so that this Woodstock (or Benton) one must have made a really spectacular descent unless it fell in the daytime. As far as I know the press did not mention it. Has anyone any more information about it?

This is no time of the year to discuss wild flowers but we can still investigate a variety of fruits which form the fall and winter food of birds and mammals. If you locate the berries and nuts you will have a pretty good idea where to look for these creatures. If the Manitoba Maple (Box Elder), which has been introduced in many districts, has plenty of key fruits watch it for the Evening Grosbeaks which fed on it in the west and have apparently followed it east. If there are plenty of cones on the spruces and balsam perhaps the Crossbills will be unusually abundant. If there is a good crop of bechnuts the Bluejays will be around all winter and the Red Squirrels and, in the southwest of the province, the Gray Squirrels will congregate in the beech groves. In the deeper woods, as every deer hunter knows, the deer dig through the snow and the leaves on the beech ridges as long as a nut is to be found and fatten on the mast.

There has been an enormous crop of Rowan (Mountain Ash) berries in southern New Brunswick this fall, so many that it has taken the great flocks of Starlings in this region until the start of the New Year to consume the most of them. Smaller flocks of Starlings, from 200 to perhaps 1,000 were common throughout the area.

from early fall but from December 20th until the end of the month they congregated in the vicinity of the Museum in flocks beyond counting, probably not more than 10,000 to 15,000 at one time but giving the impression that 100,000 would be a low estimate.

In October a flock of more than 100 Cedar Waxwings were feeding on the Mountain Ash berries on the Museum property.

January is one of the best months of the year for studying the stars and planets. If your activities keep you on the city streets or travelling with a car roof over your head you may never find this out. The three nearest planets, Venus, Mars and Jupiter, may all be seen in the evening sky after sunset at the beginning of the year. Take a pair of binoculars or a small telescope and see that Venus is crescent-shaped like the new moon when it looks the largest and try to find one or two of the numerous moons of Jupiter. If your eyesight is exceptionally good you may be able to see one of these moons with your naked eye simply by holding up a card to block off the light of the planet.

Several of our ferns are not affected by the frost and stay green throughout the winter. Hence such names as Christmas Fern, Evergreen Fern, and Holly Fern. Crested Shield, Marginal Shield, and Polypody are other ferns I have collected in the winter.

I wonder if Mourning Doves are getting commoner here. We recorded one found dead near West Saint John in December 1950, the first winter record known to us. Now we have reports of one seen alive and then on December 12 found dead at Fundy National Park. Another was seen alive at St. Andrews by Miss MacCoubrey about January 4, 1953. We have casual summer records for this dove back to 1880.

Very great interest has been shown in eastern United States and Canada in the striking yellow, black and white robin-sized Evening Grosbeaks which come into this region every winter in increasing numbers. Michigan and western Ontario used to be the eastern limit of this species in summer but recently several banded in Maine and Connecticut have been found in summer at Plaster Rock and numbers of them now breed in that part of New Brunswick. The earliest fall record in southern New Brunswick was October 24th, 1952 at Stanley. Helen Squires saw a large flock at Fredericton December 20th and they were reported in Moncton January 1st.

W. W. Turnbull of New York who reports that he receives "Nature News" from his father who is a life member of the Museum writes that he saw a Pileated Woodpecker at Gorham's Bluff, Kings County, on November 3rd. This is one of our rarer and certainly our largest woodpecker and if you ever see one you will remember it. It is many years since I saw one in New Brunswick but I saw one in Maine in 1951. In the 1920's this woodpecker was often seen on the campus of the University of N.B.

A single Canada Goose was reported at Fredericton December 18th and a flock at Moncton (Machum) December 23rd.

Miss Willa MacCoubrey reports twenty-three species of birds at St. Andrews in the first four days of January. Black Duck, Scaup sp?, American Golden-eye, Barrow's Golden-eye, Buffle-head, Old-squaw, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Dove (Common Pigeon), Mourning Dove, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Robin, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Starling, House Sparrow, Goldfinch, Junco, and Song Sparrow.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. IV

March 1953

Number 2.

FOREWORD

There have been plenty of reports from correspondents in the southern section of the province for this number but none from the north. Actually it would be just as important to know that a good observer in Dalhousie saw only one Chickadee all winter as to hear that a hundred Robins appeared nearly every day in Saint John. We would like to hear about all the early flowers and birds "down north" by the first of May.

Mr. George Boyer, Canadian Wildlife Officer, Sackville, R.R.No.1, writes that he would like to have voluntary co-operators to study broods of waterfowl in a small marsh or pond in their home neighborhoods this coming summer. If anyone is interested they should write Mr. Boyer at the above address for information and record forms.

W. A. Squires, Curator.

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This has been a remarkable winter for both numbers and varieties of birds in southern New Brunswick. We are just beginning to realize why our friends in New England and New York have always been so enthusiastic about feeding stations and winter censuses. Many of the birds which usually go further south have stayed here this winter.

For the benefit of our readers who live to the south of us I should report that southern N.B. has not yet had subzero weather this winter and on only a few occasions has it been near the zero mark. In many places the ground has been almost continuously bare and most of the precipitation came as rain. Further north in the province there has been much more snow and a great deal of ice but the weather has been milder than normal. Only the flower enthusiast is worried. How much winter-killing will there be because there was no snow blanket?

Evening Grosbeaks have apparently been more common near Saint John than ever before. I have had numerous reports from Saint John, Lancaster, Beaconsfield, Milledgeville, Grand Bay, Rothesay, Fairvale, and Hampton. One report for Rothesay says they were first seen in January, 12 to 20 appeared daily in February, and "large numbers" were present by March 8th, 20 to 30 were at St. Andrews February 11th to March 10th.

This year for the first time I have had wildflowers picked outdoors in mid-winter sent to the Museum. The following were all found at St. Andrews on January 25th: Purple Dead-nettle - Lamium purpureum by Miss Georgie Mears;

Field Speedwell - Veronica agrestis by Mrs. Donald Williamson;

Common Groundsel - Senecio vulgaris by Robert Lowery.

These are all weeds naturalized from Europe and their blossoms are scarcely flowers in the usually accepted meaning of the word; you wouldn't pick them in July but in January !! These should probably be considered late fall blooms but the Coltsfoot - Tussilago farfara brought into my office on March 19th by two little girls from the King George School in Saint John is certainly the earliest spring bloom this year or any year.

I was much interested in examining the estimates for 1952 of the increase or decrease in game and other animals prepared by the Game Division of the Depart-

ment of Lands and Mines, and sent to me by Lt. Col. C. A. Williams, Chief Game Warden. A large number of observers representing every county submit their reports which are carefully tabulated. Briefly we can say that the moose, bear, beaver, red fox, porcupine, and wildcat have scored increases, while the skunk and rabbit (northern hare) have just about held their own, and the deer on the whole is estimated to have decreased considerably. However estimates for different parts of the province differ greatly as for example all observers in Saint John and Carleton counties recorded increases in the skunk population which confirms everyone's suspicions based on the numbers killed on the highways in the St. John valley.

A number of Compton Tortoise Shell butterflies have been reported. There is nothing unusual about this as these butterflies winter as adults and start flying whenever they get warm enough, even after a severe winter. Miss H. W. MacCoubrey reported Woolly Bear caterpillars seen at St. Andrews in January, February and March.

This has been a great winter for Redpolls. I suspect that most of these Arctic birds usually go farther south. I do not remember ever meeting them on the streets of Saint John before this winter. Hundreds have been seen here and they have been reported from Minto December 17th; Salisbury January 21st; Fredericton January - March. They evidently came down to the sea at St. Andrews in great numbers, 1000 to 1500 being seen there in a few minutes on March 15th. I am afraid that some observers have mistaken the Redpoll for the Ruby-crowned Kinglet which is a summer resident.

Twenty-four Cowbirds were seen at Bayside, Charlotte County, for several days in February by Mrs. Foster Rigby who also reported a Meadowlark on the 22nd. A flock of Canada Geese were on the Shepody Marshes in Albert County from January 12th to 14th; a Baltimore Oriole was seen at Fredericton by Melvin Moore on December 2nd; the fifth Red-eyed Towhee recorded in New Brunswick appeared at St. Andrews in October and the same or another was seen there January 13th and was still there on the fifteenth of March.

Purple Finches have been unusually abundant. I saw at least twenty-five in one flock at Fredericton on March 7th, a very rosy male at Saint John on the 10th, and another small flock on the 19th. I saw Song Sparrows at least twice in Saint John, once late in February and again early in March. Miss MacCoubrey reported a Song Sparrow singing almost daily from February 1st.

Mrs. Guy Humphrey of Hampton reports great success with a feeding tray attracting Purple Finches, Pine Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, Song Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Juncoes, and Bluejays. She also saw a Pileated Woodpecker on November 24th and another of these was reported near St. Andrews.

Robins have remained in large numbers. I had a report of a flock of about a hundred in January but have lost the details. About a dozen appeared outside my office window on February 12th and many of them have been seen almost daily since then. Other winters only the occasional lone Robin has been seen here.

In 1881 a specimen of ore was collected in northeastern New Brunswick and sent to London to be assayed. The assay certificate dated February 24th, 1882, has recently been sent to the Museum by Mr. D. S. Creaghan of Newcastle and shows 17 ounces 15 pennyweight of silver per ton or 0.061 per cent and 55 per cent lead. This must be viewed with considerable interest in view of the present new mineral development in that section of the province.

NATURE NEWS

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Vol. IV

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May 1953

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Number 3  
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FOREWORD

This is the number which should contain many references to spring flowers. We have already noted the early occurrence of Coltsfoot at Saint John. Many other species are now in bloom or may even be already done for this year.

While we are looking for the spring flowers we must not forget the birds returning in their countless thousands.

W. A. Squires, Curator.

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I do not know how common the Spring Beauty is in some localities but I have found it very scarce until May 10th when I saw a large opening in the woods in Sunbury County literally carpeted with this species.

Other flowers have put in an appearance. White Violets and Wild Strawberries were reported as early as April 21st near Saint John. Mayflowers (Trailing Arbutus) from Nova Scotia were on sale by the Shubenacadie Indians at the Saint John Market on May 2nd and probably earlier. I saw the first May flowers at Fredericton Junction on April 30th. The Dog's Tooth Violet was in full bloom at Fredericton May 7th. Incidentally a teacher from Carleton County tells me that she never heard it called anything but Adder's Tongue at home. This flower is wide spread in eastern North America and these are only two of at least fourteen common names by which it is known throughout its range. Personally I prefer if I am going to misname this lily to call it a violet rather than the tongue of a kind of snake which does not even occur here.

Several of our shrubs have already burst into bloom. On May 10th I saw several species of Shadbush in bloom in York and Sunbury Counties. This shrub is commonly called Bilberry in southern New Brunswick, Indian Pear in Nova Scotia, Saskatoon Berry and June Berry elsewhere. How many different names we must know for the same species in order to recognize references to familiar plants?

A great deal of information on the salamanders and other amphibians found in New Brunswick has been added to our files since I began asking about them in this bulletin. Recently three more species collected at Brown's Flat by Stanley Gorham, Dusky, Jefferson's and Two-lined Salamanders, have been added to the collection in this Museum. We now have most of the species to be expected here and the next thing is to get series of specimens of each from various parts of the province to determine the extent of variations here. April and May are the very best months for collecting many amphibians. Toads, Tree-toads, and several of the Salamanders are in the small ponds and ditches at this time egg-laying but later they get out on land and are hard to locate. This is particularly true of the tiny Tree-toad, *Hyla crucifer*. When this species is in the water singing in the dark a flashlight will show up its greatly distended throat. In the summer it climbs shrubs and trees and when it pipes away it

is so ventriloquistic that one may search a long time without locating it.

On May 14th I had a request to identify a little blue bird feeding on a newly seeded lawn near the Museum. I immediately thought of the Indigo Bunting and then went and had a look at it. It was a young male Indigo Bunting which still had a lot of brown on the wings. In full adult male plumage this is the only bird in the east which is blue on the breast as well as on the back but it is very rare in this province. On May 16th near Oldtown, Maine, I saw three small birds fly up from the roadside which must have been this same species.

It is now a little late to mention it but many Fredericton people had the thrill of seeing numerous Canada Geese in the Saint John River right in front of the city after the ice went out. These Geese appear regularly in spring lower down the river at Jemseg and Brown's Flat but it is very unusual for them to appear at Fredericton except in flight. Many ducks may be seen all along the Saint John river at this season. The commonest of course being American Golden-eye, Black Duck and Ring-neck.

As this is written the main spring flight of Warblers is well under way. I had a report on May 14th which must have been a male Redstart. I would like very much to know which species have been seen in other communities during the spring migration.

Last year I suggested that readers examine the flowers of trees. I took my own advice recently and found the blossoms of the Red Maple particularly attractive and decorative. If the Pussy Willow is the only Willow blossom you are familiar with you should examine the blossoms of the other willows and learn to recognize the pistillate as well as the staminate flowers. The "pussies" are staminate blossoms and are later covered with yellow pollen.

Miss Janet M. Curry of Andover keeps us up to date on the birds of that area. Writing on May 16th she reports that Evening Grosbeaks had not been seen for more than a week. Previously flocks of as many as fifty individuals had been present. She also saw a White-crowned Sparrow from April 30th to May 16th and mentioned three Cowbirds among birds fed after a heavy April snowstorm.

The current excitement over minerals in New Brunswick has been reflected in an increasing demand to have minerals identified by this museum department. I have seen a few good looking specimens of galena, chalcopyrites, and pyrolusite among a great variety of rocks showing shiny pieces of mica or a few crystals of fool's gold.

By now everyone who has a flower garden has learned part of the price of a mild open winter. A great many perennials such as Canterbury Bells and Foxgloves and even the comparatively hardy Phlox were winter-killed and great patches of lawn are still brown. In my own garden we thought for a while that even the yellow Daffodils were casualties. Some of them did come through finally but they had been under such a layer of ice that they were several weeks later blooming than last year.

NATURE NEWS

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Vol. IV.

July 1953

Number 4  
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FOREWORD

There have been a good number of reports from observers since the May issue of the "News" appeared. Most of these have referred to birds and it would appear that more people are interested in birds than in any other branch of natural science. I suppose that to anyone except a botanist or geologist it is obvious why this should be so. However no one interested in nature needs to be urged to study and learn to identify new forms whether they be birds or plants, rocks, minerals or fish or what have you.

W. A. Squires, Curator.

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If anyone argues with you that our New Brunswick climate is getting milder do not disagree with him too violently as he may be right. Even the weather experts now admit that there is sufficient evidence to consider the possibility in all of eastern North America.

The birds and animals apparently have come to this conclusion without consulting the weatherman. More and more species previously unknown or extremely rare this far north are appearing here in increasing numbers.

Scarlet Tanager: I have reports of one or more being seen at Saint John, Oromocto, Sheffield, and Fredericton May 17 - 25. These are the first reports of this species since this bulletin was started and although there have been a few records during past years this looks like a great increase.

Killdeer: Only two specimens are known to have been collected in this province before 1945 but since then it has been found breeding from St. Andrews in the south west to Bathurst and Pokemouche in the northeast and also at Riley Brook and Nictau in the northern highland region. On June 20th I saw one at Kingsclear, York County, and on July 5th, another near Windsor, Carleton County, both probably breeding. James Bond reported one at Harvey in July.

Baltimore Oriole: You may remember the December record for Fredericton in our January number reported by Melvin Moore. This was not an isolated case as Orioles stayed north last winter in many places in the northeastern states. A few pairs have nested in the central St. John valley for many years; my earliest record being 1898 but there was no noticeable increase until recently. They now seem much more numerous in the Fredericton area. On July 19th I saw a family of these Orioles at Fredericton. They were moving through the trees so rapidly that it was impossible to count them.

Indigo Bunting: Reports continue to come in. I don't think we are yet justified in thinking that it is increasing. In addition to the one I saw in Saint John on May 14th I have a report from Mrs. Stanley Gorham of Browns Flat who saw a male June 10



& 17. Mrs. Gorham saw a pair at Browns Flat last summer. I do not yet have a breeding record for New Brunswick.

Mockingbird: I am satisfied that a bird which my daughter saw in Fredericton in June was a Mocker. One was reported from the north side of the river near Fredericton in June 1941. I have heard that one was collected in Prince Edward Island in 1952.

Meadowlark: There are a few old records but this species now seems to be increasing steadily with more reports every year from the southern half of the province and the St. John River valley.

American Egret: This and the white form of the Little Blue Heron are seen nearly every summer. A white heron reported to me in June was seen for several days in the marshes east of Saint John but I did not see it to determine which species it was.

Many more species could be added to this list but this is enough to show that there is a general northerly movement of these more southerly birds.

Mrs. A. B. Williston of Newcastle calls our attention to the Cuckoos which appeared there recently to feed on the Tent Caterpillars when there was an outbreak of this insect. This is one of the few birds which relish the Tent Caterpillars.

W. W. Turnbull writes that guides on the Upsalquitch reported hearing both the Cuckoo and the Whippoorwill during the last week of June. This is apparently the first report of a Whippoorwill in Restigouche County although they have been reported to me from the Bathurst area. Cuckoos are rare everywhere in the province but both the Yellow-billed and the Black-billed have been reported from the northern counties a number of times.

At Fredericton my daughter recently saw a pair of Juncos feeding their own young and a big foster-child, a young Cowbird. They were fortunate to have any young Juncos as the young Cowbirds usually hatch first and shove all the other eggs out of the nest. Cowbirds never nest themselves but parasitize many species of birds even including the tiny warblers.

Evening Grosbeaks apparently are abundant in Victoria and Restigouche counties this summer and seem to be unaffected by the Spruce Budworm spraying programme. I was in Nictau very briefly on July 5th and while I did not see any of the Grosbeaks myself I was shown a Manitoba Maple tree in which they had been seen the night before. Frank Webb, entomologist in charge of the spraying project said that he had seen Evening Grosbeaks every time he had visited the air-strip at Robinsonville near the mouth of the Upsalquitch some 60 miles north-northeast of Nictau. James Bond reported these grosbeaks abundant at Riley Brook on July 17th and said that he had seen one partly grown young there.

NATURE NEWS

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Vol. IV.

September 1953

Number 5  
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F O R E W O R D

If you are keeping a file of "Nature News", and I hope you are, please note that the July number was inadvertently marked Vol. V. instead of Vol. IV.

We expect to issue one more number late in November or early in December and would appreciate items of interest for it.

W.A. Squires, Curator.

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Several large four-winged flies (Hymenoptera) have been brought into the Museum recently. These were the Ichneumon fly Megarhyssa lunator (sorry no common name) which parasitizes another four-winged woodborer, the Pigeon Horn-tail. This Ichneumon has what looks like a tail  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. This is made up of three parts, a central tube, the ovipositor, and two sheathes which fit together to cover the ovipositor and serve as a drill. In egg-laying position the drill is looped up over the back and down between the legs. The abdomen seems to supply the power and a hole as much as two inches deep is drilled into a tree where the adult has decided horn-tails are at work. The eggs are deposited singly in the horn-tail burrows and as soon as hatched the Ichneumon grub squirms along the burrows until it finds a horn-tail larva which it attacks and kills by sucking its blood. When the Ichneumon changes to the adult it either finds its way out through a horn-tail burrow or gnaws a new hole for itself. I have seen these insects on maple, beech, and elm and the whole life history of both species can be observed at a glance if one of these trees which is infested is cut down and split open.

The modern high-speed automobile takes a very considerable toll of wildlife, large and small, but particularly small. We are all familiar with the great variety of insects, butterflies, bumblebees, and a host of smaller forms which are dashed to death against the front of cars. Then there are great numbers of birds, frogs, field-mice, etc., as well as the more conspicuous porcupines and skunks which are usually killed at night. I often wondered why there were not more small bodies strewn along the highways until I took a drive recently at dawn when I found out. Just as day broke the road for miles was policed by crows and the occasional raven all busy gathering the meat which the cars had provided. One of the ravens was feasting on the carcass of a rabbit and on other occasions I have seen ravens feeding on groundhogs and porcupines. Undoubtedly near the sea coast the gulls would also demand a share of the booty.

You may have noted the very apparent increase in the number of dead porcupines on New Brunswick highways this past summer. I would suggest that the snout hunters who gladly removed the dead porcupines for the fifty-cent bounty have left them this year for everyone to see, since the bounty has been removed, but that no sudden great increase in porcupines has taken place.

A reader in New York has sent me clippings giving fuller details of the slaughter of migrating birds which collided with the Empire State Building on September 22nd and which was also briefly reported in our local press. It appears that 277 bodies of nineteen species, mostly warblers, were picked up.

104 were Bay-breasted Warblers, which apparently made up the bulk of the flight. Normally warblers fly much above the 1250 feet height of this building but apparently an unusual weather formation forced them down.

On the same morning a Black and White Warbler which had collided with a building or wire was picked up on a Saint John street while still warm and brought into the Muscum.

There are many factors connected with bird migration which baffle explanation and not the least of these is the impulse which causes birds, which live happily in the sunshine all summer long, to set out in the darkness on their long flight south.

In September and October this northern countryside of ours flames with a blaze of colour as the trees prepare for winter. We admire this pageant of course but we also take it very much for granted and do not fully appreciate it until we have experienced the dull, drabs and browns so prevalent in less favoured locales at this season.

There is a great deal of misinformation about the colour change in the leaves and a great deal still to be learned, but a few statements can be made with some certainty. The change is not caused by frost although cool weather seems to enhance it. We saw a few maple branches turning red this past August during a prolonged heat wave. The brightest reds are said to occur only when sugar and tannin are present. In late summer the chlorophyll in the leaf stops producing sugar and starch and fades away until it becomes transparent. This exposes the yellow colour (xanthophyll) which is there all the time. The red colour (erythrophyll) is only produced when the sunlight can get into the leaf without being filtered through the green chlorophyll and is formed after the chlorophyll disappears. These colours can be extracted from the leaves and preserved for a time in liquid solution, the xanthophyll with alcohol and the erythrophyll with hot water.

The most brilliant reds are found on the Red Maple and the Staghorn Sumach; Cherry and Red Oak are usually a little duller; and low down the leaves on the Blueberry bushes often form a scarlet carpet. The Sugar or Rock Maple contributes the great mass of yellow and orange often suffused with red. Birch, poplar and many others contribute their share. If you watch carefully you may be surprised to see how the Tamarack adds to the show. To collect and identify leaves of all the trees and shrubs which display brilliant autumn colours would appear to be a worthwhile project.

Several parties are doing research on the seasonal movements of Evening Grosbeaks and any information you can furnish us, such as first fall records, size of flocks, percentage of males and females, etc., will assist. Records of nests or young would be very important. Evening Grosbeaks were first reported breeding in New Brunswick before 1940 and have been seen in increasing numbers in the north of the province nearly every summer since then, but I have yet to hear of a nest with eggs or young being found here. Adults have been seen feeding older young several times.

N A T U R E   N E W S

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Vol. IV.

November-December 1953

Number 6  
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FOREWORD

This is the most difficult number of the year to get sufficient items for. We omitted it last year but feel that a bi-monthly bulletin really gives the best coverage. Most of the notes from observers concern birds at this season of the year so that reports of late blooming plants were more than welcome.

Your attention is directed to the additional reports of Killdeers. It would appear that this plover which formerly was only considered as rare or casual in occurrence here will soon be a common sight. (See the July number for other reports).

While the most welcome contribution readers can make to "Nature News" is to send in reports of their observations, it is felt that some who are not now members of the Museum might wish to become members and thus help to defray the expenses involved in printing and mailing this bulletin. Members also receive bulletins issued by the art and history departments, are privileged to attend Museum functions, etc. Non-resident members are those living more than 25 miles from the Museum. Application forms are enclosed for the use of non-members who have not already received a form from another department. Duplicates should be passed on to interested friends.

W. A. Squires, Curator.

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Two Killdeers were seen at Sheffield May 8th, 30 at the same place August 28th, and six at Dumfries, York County, August 29th, all by D. K. Parr of Fredericton. Melvin Moore reported two pairs nesting successfully during the past summer, one at South Devon (Fredericton) and the other about five miles away at Douglas. These added to the records in our July issue suggest a very considerable increase in the local population of this plover.

Mr. Parr also reported a Crested Flycatcher at Jemseg June 20th; and a Scarlet Tanager at Sheffield May 17th. These are rather belated reports but for these rarer species should be placed on record. Mr. Moore found a pair of Meadowlarks at Springhill this past summer and in November saw a group of three young of the year. He also saw a Robin at Fredericton on December 21st, a very unusual occurrence for that locality although Robins are often seen along the south coast in winter.

Miss Willa MacCoubrey reported several hundred Bonaparte Gulls in the Bay of Fundy between L'Etete and Deer Island on November 16th. She saw two males and one female Hooded Mergansers at Bocabec November 17th and 21st. A female Hooded Merganser shot on the Saint John River near Hampstead was brought to the Museum early in November for identification.

Miss MacCoubrey also supplied the first fall records of the Evening Grosbeaks in southern New Brunswick. She saw about a dozen at St. Andrews on November 1st and also on the 16th and 20th. These were about half males. I saw eight and Mr. Moore twelve at Fredericton on December 26th.

New Brunswick beavers appear to be well reestablished in parts of the forest where they have not been known for many years. I found several dams during October and November, one of which was really outstanding. It was at least four feet high and was built across a stream fully fifty feet wide and then continued through the swamp for several hundred feet further to take care of the overflow. It must have been a considerable colony to build such a structure but so much country was flooded that the beaver lodge could not be located without a boat. It is interesting to note that the nearest settlement has been known as Beaver Dam for more than 150 years.

Did you know that a beaver continues to grow as long as it lives or that it can stay under water for fifteen minutes?

In southern New Brunswick this fall we revelled in unusually mild weather with the ground unfrozen and no snow until December 14th. This contrasts with the freeze-up and snow often by November 1st twenty-five years ago. It is interesting to note that many flowers and weeds continued to bloom and produce seeds far beyond their accustomed season. I saw roses picked out-of-doors in November and marigolds blooming in December. Pansies are always hardy but a large bouquet of almost prize blooms on December 13th was something of a record for Fredericton.

Miss Georgie Mears of St. Andrews, who reported several weeds in bloom there last January, sent us a list of plants still in bloom in November. These included Red Clover, Yellow Clover, Rabbits-foot Clover and White Sweet Clover, Bull Thistle, Sow Thistle and Star Thistle, Mayweed, Evening Primrose, Buttercup, Yarrow, Common Dandelion and Fall Dandelion, Groundsel, Shepherd's Purse, Chickweed and Field Speedwell, as well as Tansy and one or two species of Aster and Goldenrod, Mustard and Strawberry. This is an imposing list for this season and no doubt other communities could supply many additional species. One thought which occurs to me is how much faster many of the introduced European weeds will spread if they are going to have one or two additional months to produce seeds each year.

Miss May Armand of Jacksonville, writing in the middle of December, reported the leaf buds on the lilacs bursting and showing the green of the leaves at that time. This probably has happened with other shrubs and trees which depend on the stimulus of frost followed by warm weather to start the new season's growth. What effect the more severe cold which must follow will have on these shrubs remains to be seen.