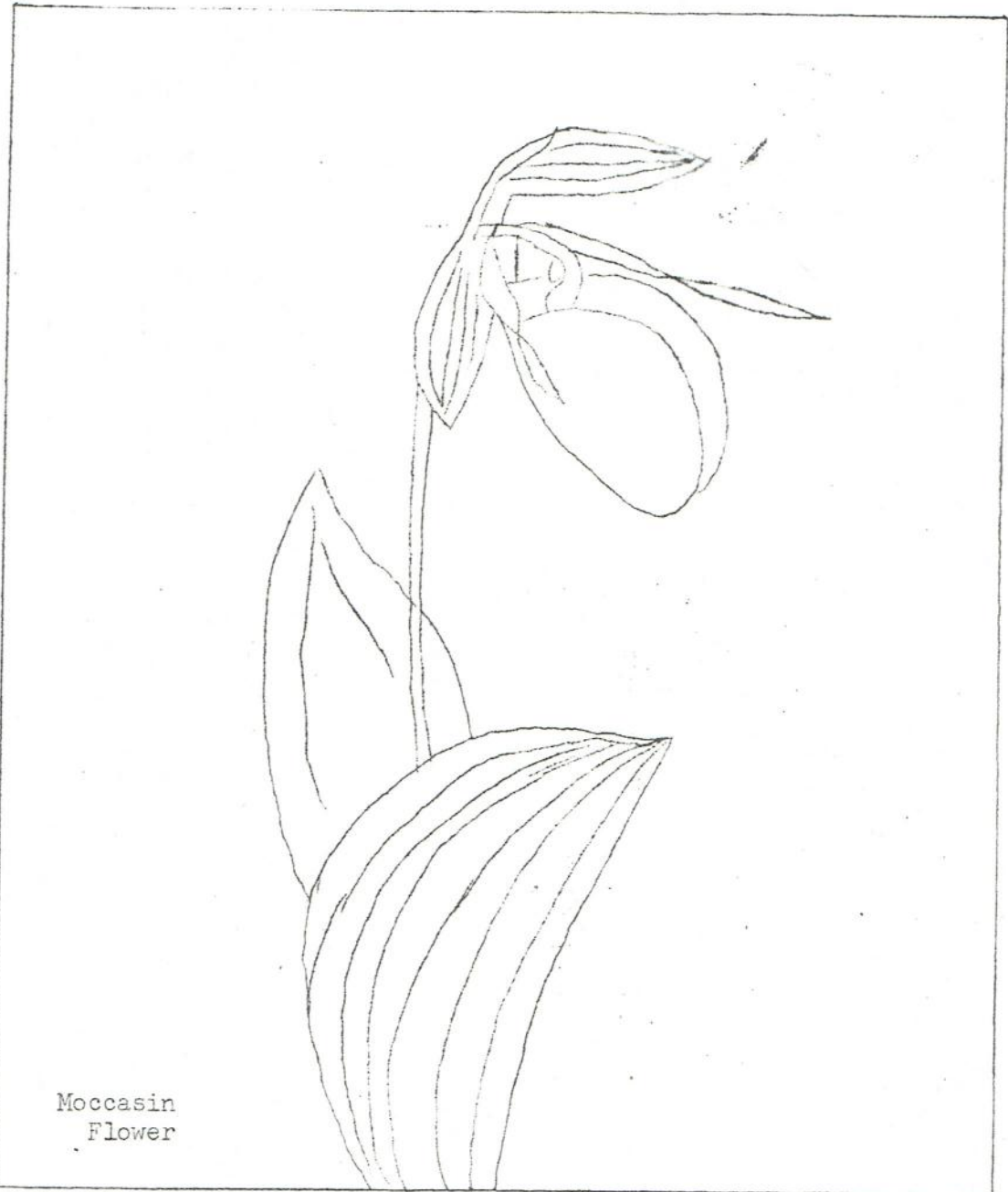


NATURE NEWS



Moccasin  
Flower

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of  
THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM  
Saint John, N. B.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VII

January - February 1956

Number 1

F O R E W O R D

On the whole this rather unusual winter has been favorable to birds.

Starlings and English Sparrows seem to be prospering and the former has been reported from many communities where I doubt if they remained in winter until the last year or so. There are great flocks in Fredericton this winter.

This number is devoted almost entirely to winter birds but readers are invited to send in notes and information for the next number pertaining to nature.

W.A. Squires, Curator

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Bird Banding - the capturing of a wild bird, placing a serially numbered metal ring on its leg, and releasing it - has added greatly to our knowledge of birds. During the past thirty to forty years more than seven million North American birds have been banded and of these about half a million have been recovered.

The age to which birds live is one point quite readily determined in this way. A Caspian Tern recovered 26 years after it was banded is a champion in this field but a Ring-billed Gull, an Osprey, a Mallard duck and a Pintail duck have been recovered which had known ages of over 20 years. Among the smaller land birds the Purple Martin and the Blue Jay have been found to live for 14 years and the Chimney Swift 13. These are all quite common birds in this Province.

Banding has also disclosed how far some birds travel. The Pintail is almost a world traveller. A few years ago one banded in Labrador was found just 18 days later in southern England. Another banded in California was found less than three months later in New Zealand. It has also been proved that some other birds do not travel more than a few miles in their whole lives.

Everyone who finds a dead bird with a band on it can have a share in accumulating this information. Every year I forward one or more bands to the proper authorities. In Vol. VI, No.5, I mentioned the Evening Grosbeak which had been banded in Berlin, N.H. and recovered at Andover, N.B. I now have a return on a Purple Finch banded March 7, 1953, at Ardmore, Pennsylvania and recovered in Saint John in May 1955.

People who live near the open water of the seashore have an opportunity to see many more species of birds during the winter than those living inland. Cold as the sea water is at this season by our standards, many birds both live on it and feed in it. For example Mrs. James Bradshaw of St. Martins reported a European Cormorant and both Black and Eider Ducks at Salmon River in January and early February.

Mrs. Bradshaw considered January a very poor month for birds at St. Martins; Ravens, Crows and Snow Buntings being about the only land birds noted. Ravens were very scarce compared to 1955 when she could count up to 50 a day coming to get bones and meat she put out for them. I never heard of anyone feeding Ravens before and I doubt if very many bird observers have ever been in a position where they could attract so many.

Mr. P. Burpee Jardine reported a Blackbird at Richibucto on January 21st and Mrs. Bradshaw also reported one at St. Martins in January. Blackbirds are seldom seen here in winter. Both reports mentioned Starlings as well so that the difference between these two species was noted but it is impossible from the reports to judge which species of blackbird was seen, Bronzed Grackle or Rusty Blackbird, but I think the latter is most hardy.

The birds we usually expect to see in the winter were very common in some localities. 200 to 300 Redpolls were reported near Rothesay, January 12th and 13th; Snow Buntings at St. Martins in January and at Fredericton February 3rd to 9th; Chickadees in small numbers everywhere. Miss Alice Foster reported 6 or 7 Evening Grosbeaks at Salisbury from the end of November to January 10th and I had a report of a large flock at Andover early in February, and another near Westfield, but I would like to have more detailed reports on this conspicuous bird so that I could get some idea of its numbers and distribution in the Province.

Occasionally someone confuses the Rose-breasted Grosbeak with the male Pine Grosbeak and reports the former in winter. If you are doubtful of the difference examine a good colored plate. There is almost no chance of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak being seen in New Brunswick between October 1st and May 1st.

Two of our correspondents very definitely identified Pine Grosbeaks - Mrs. Bradshaw at St. Martins January 2nd and 3rd and Mrs. R.G. Thexton at Fredericton December 2nd to January 6th.

Mrs. Thexton also reported one very unusual occurrence, a Song Sparrow, which has been coming to her feeding tray from late fall until February 12th, the latest report. Song Sparrows have been reported occasionally in former years near the Bay of Fundy but this is the first inland report later than November.

While looking for the unusual, whether it is birds, flowers or some other branch of natural science, we are apt to overlook the commonplace. Perhaps this is why the last kind of winter bird that I think to mention is the Gull that I see a hundred times a day. To people living away from the coast it is probably news that Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls winter in thousands at the mouth of the St. John River. In fact there seems to be little change in numbers the year round only banding showing that the Gulls found here in summer may wander as far as the Gulf of Mexico. Looking over the winter gull flocks to be seen from the Museum window on February 21st I was able to identify only one northern species, an immature Glaucous Gull. At the same time I counted well over 100 American Golden-eye ducks - the "Whistler" of the hunting fraternity.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VII

March-April

Number 2

F O R E W O R D

This is the time of the tremendous northern surge of bird life and this number must be chiefly concerned with this annual phenomenon, with the winter birds that are leaving us and the transients and summer residents which are arriving. We can only touch on a small percentage of these each year but it is hoped that the reader may be inspired to seek the acquaintance of as many of our birds as he or she may meet.

The response from readers since our last number has been very gratifying and has added much to the interest of this one.

W. A. Squires  
Curator

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The cold and snowy spring which was so general in New Brunswick this year delayed the arrival of migrants ten days to two weeks. Such typical early migrants as Song Sparrows, Juncoes, Robins and Blackbirds which sometimes appear in great flocks as early as March 28th were conspicuous by their absence until the 7th of April when large flocks of Song Sparrows and Juncoes were reported at Ingleside by Mrs. McKinney and many Robins at Hammond River. One of the most numerous species in the province in early April was still the Redpoll which comes south to us in winter. On March 26th I saw thousands of Redpolls along the highway between Fredericton and Woodstock. These were probably working their way northward but the only bird seen which would not have been there a month or two earlier was the Crow. There were Crows in small groups all along the way.

There have been many interesting reports of winter birds sent in. Miss Janet Curry of Andover reported the largest flocks of Snow Buntings (Snowbirds) for two weeks in February that she had ever seen; she said "the air was filled with them, then they'd settle down on the snow and feed off the weed seeds." Mrs. Bradshaw also reported large numbers at St. Martins in February and March.

Miss Curry also reported another Evening Grosbeak found dead with a band on it. It was found about November 15th, 1955, and had been banded at Amsterdam, New York on December 8th, 1954.

Pine Grosbeaks were noted at Fredericton, one on January 6th by Mr. D. Kermode Parr and a dozen on February 19th by Mr. R.B. Malloy. Mrs. Bradshaw also saw a small number at St. Martins February 28th and Mrs. Chester Whittier reported a flock near St. Andrews all winter feeding on frozen apples.

Bluejays were never so numerous being common all last summer and all winter with reports from too many localities to list. Driving along the St. John River Valley every once in a while there is a flash of blue.

Evening Grosbeaks have apparently been well distributed over the Province this winter. The following reports have been received since the last number went out. Eight at St. Andrews February 8th Earl Caughey, 3 at Bathurst February 12th Miss Mary Foster, a large flock at Ingleside, Kings County, March 25th Mrs. McKinney. I saw one at Fredericton March 17th and another at Hawkshaw March 26th and Miss Curry at Andover reports that they have the Evening Grosbeak with them all the time and this means summer as well as winter.

As usual a few Robins have spent the winter along the Bay of Fundy shore. Mrs. Bradshaw reported one at St. Martins February 8th, Mr. G. G. Murdoch one at Saint John February 23rd and Mr. G.M. Brown one at Lancaster February 24th. Seen on these dates these would all be birds which stopped here on the southward migration.

There are many places along the Bay of Fundy shore where ducks congregate in winter. St. Andrews harbour where hunting is not permitted is one of these. During the past winter from November to March Mr. Earl Caughey reported about 150 Scaup and a dozen Black Ducks there as well as Buffleheads and American Goldeneyes.

Although the spring was late and the snow deep there was some movement of early migrants during March. Mrs. Whittier reported Horned Larks near St. Andrews on February 28th. The Kaare Smiths at St. Martins were feeding a flock of 20 Horned Larks which arrived March 15th and stayed to the end of the month. Miss Mabel MacCoubrey also reported Horned Larks six of which were seen at East Saint John March 21st.

Miss Mary Foster reported seven large white geese with black ends to the wings - apparently Snow Geese - at South Bathurst on March 15th and one with Canada Geese later in the month.

Another unusual report was a Phoebe seen at Ingleside by Mrs. McKinney March 25th. While Phobes are fairly scarce it is not unusual to see them early. Although they are flycatchers they may winter in New England and I have seen them in New Brunswick as early as March 16th. How can a bird that feeds on insects survive when the ground is covered with snow? The fact is that in late winter and early spring it can feed on seeds and berries. It has even been known to take fish fry from the streams it nests beside.

March and April are the months when we can easily see deer in this province without looking for them. The press has again referred to large herds in the Lake Utopia area of Charlotte County and for the first two weeks of April at least everyone travelling by C.P.R. between Welsford and Fredericton Junction has been on the lookout for them. Five is the most we have seen there this year with one of them almost within reach of the train. Last year we counted 52 in five miles one sunny morning. We would be much interested to know of other areas where people expect to seek plenty of deer at this season.

A Mourning Cloak Butterfly seen at Fredericton on April 15th must have been nearly the earliest of this species to emerge from hibernation.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VII

May - June 1956

Number 3

F O R E W O R D

This is the number which covers the period of the greatest bird migration and the blooming of the more conspicuous wild flowers.

There have been a few reports on flowers and many on birds. I can only select the more significant or unusual.

We have been especially pleased to receive reports on birds and animals recorded at Baker Lake, Madawaska County from Miss Leilamay White of Madawaska, Maine. We have never had reports from this extreme north-westerly corner of New Brunswick before.

W.A. Squires, Curator,

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The most outstanding feature of spring in New Brunswick in common with much of eastern North America was the lateness and coldness of the season. Since spring flowers are so dependent on the weather their occurrence is a good guide to the lateness or earliness of the season. From former numbers of "Nature News" I find that the Shadbush (Bilberry or Service berry) showed its very first blooms in southern New Brunswick on May 10, 1953, May 11, 1951, May 20, 1955 and May 26, 1956.

We mentioned last year the study being made of the effect of high velocity and high altitude air streams along the Atlantic coast on spring bird migration. This year there were several spectacular results which were reported in the press. Several Glossy Ibis from Florida landing in Newfoundland and Summer Tanagers in Halifax about April 20th were the most unusual. A Scarlet Tanager reported at Fredericton April 18th by R.B. Malloy must have arrived in this way as well as Indigo Buntings reported near Saint John on April 22nd.

There were many reports of Scarlet Tanagers in the Saint John area and isolated reports from Mace's Bay, Brown's Flat, Hampton and Sackville from May 25th to June 4th. In this same area I have had only one report in the last ten years. Whether these birds represent an unusual wave of normal migration or a flock carried here in late April and not reported for several weeks seems impossible to determine.

Cowbirds have increased greatly in eastern North America in the last few years. Mrs. John Trigg of Buctouche reports the first large flock for this province about two dozen (all males but one). No date is given but late winter is indicated. As Cowbirds are parasitic forcing smaller birds to rear their young their increase in numbers indicates a corresponding reduction in smaller birds such as Vireos and Warblers. Mrs. Bradshaw reported Cowbirds at St. Martins February 29th; Mrs. Nutter at St. Andrews on April 13th; Miss White four at Baker's Lake on May 12th. I saw a male at Fredericton May 6th.

A Crested Flycatcher reported at East St. John on May 26th by Miss Mabel MacCoubrey is of special interest due to the scarcity of this species here.

Mourning Doves are also scarce but seem to be increasing slowly. Mrs. Nutter reported two at St. Andrews April 25th and Mrs. Leigh Devoe saw two at Fairvale May 25th. I had a brief glimpse from a car of what must have been one near Nerepis on May 29th.

Many Warblers died soon after arrival due to lack of food. They all apparently arrived at about the usual time in spite of the weather. Mrs. Bradshaw saw the earliest, a Palm Warbler, at St. Martins on April 19th. One of the great differences noted in Miss White's report from Baker Lake was "many Cape May Warblers on May 19th." I doubt if anyone ever sees many Cape May Warblers in the south of the province. It is years since I have seen one. She also reported one Black-throated Blue Warbler and one Northern Water-thrush on May 21st. Others of the rarer Warblers reported include the Black and White at Salisbury May 20th by Miss Alice Foster, the Canada Warbler and Chestnut-sided Warbler at Saint John late in May by Mrs. A.R. Marr and a Black-poll Warbler at East St. John May 26th by Miss MacCoubrey.

Last year we reported Magpies at St. Andrews, St. Martins and Grand Manan. There were also many reports in Maine but there is not as yet a satisfactory explanation for their occurrence in the northeast. On April 6th, 8th and 10th Mrs. Kaare Smith and Mr. Henry Huttges saw a big black and white bird with a long tail which apparently was still another Magpie at St. Martins.

Mrs. Bradshaw reported the first frogs or toads heard at St. Martins April 28th; Mrs. McKinney made a similar report for Ingleside May 13th; Miss Armand at Jacksonville May 12th.

Miss Armand also saw a Red-bellied Snake at Jacksonville on May 12th.

Mrs. McKinney reported the first Dandelions in bloom at Ingleside May 1st; White Violets May 11th and Dog-tooth Violets May 12th. Miss Armand reported Wild Hazelnuts in bloom May 2nd and Wild Strawberry blossoms and Blue Violets May 12th at Jacksonville. Yellow Violets were in bloom at Fredericton May 26th and Miss Armand saw them at Island Park, Woodstock June 3rd.

I have no reports this year of Hepaticas or even a first blooming record for the Trailing Arbutus (Mayflower) although I found the latter in full bloom at Ripples on May 20th and saw children with bunches to sell at Geary, Sunbury County as early as May 11th.

I would like to get information on the distribution of the Raccoon in New Brunswick. From the maps in American edited books on Mammals it should not be found north of a line passing from Grand Falls to Newcastle. I have reports but no definite records from this northern area but it is so common in much of the rest of the Province that I would not be surprised to find it throughout the north as well. Miss Armand reported six killed at Jacksonville during the winter and I saw three on the highway at Welsford March 28th.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VII

July - August 1956

Number 4

F O R E W O R D

Since our last number was issued early in June I have had reports sent in from many widely scattered points in the province giving a good coverage and indicating a wide interest in nature.

It is these reports from readers that make this bulletin worthwhile. Some letters I receive contain enough information for a complete issue. All information whether I am able to use it or not is preserved for future reference.

W.A. Squires, Curator.

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The late summer flowers do not seem to awake as much interest as those of spring. Probably the awe inspired by the miracle of the renewal of life after the winter's chill has abated and we are so sated with bloom that flowers have become commonplace. Actually the profusion of summer flowers far surpasses that of the earlier season.

The most delicate and probably least known of our flowers of July and August are the Orchids. The Ladys' Slippers, Pink and Yellow, blooming in June are quite well-known but how many are familiar with the Showy Orchis, White Bog Orchis, White Fringed Orchis, Ragged Fringed Orchis, Large Purple Fringed Orchis, Smaller Purple Fringed Orchis and Ladies Tresses to name but a few of the thirty-five species of New Brunswick orchids included in the Museum Herbarium.

For anyone studying our plants this Herbarium offers an exceptional opportunity to compare plants with named specimens which is often very useful when identifying difficult species. There are upwards of 2000 flowering plants in this Province.

Wildflowers by the roadside form one of the peculiar charms of touring to natives and summer visitors alike and the ugly brown roadside so prevalent in Northern New Brunswick this year as a result of the use of spray to kill bushes has been brought to my attention again and again. One correspondent from Maine made special reference to one of the "Keep New Brunswick Green" signs surrounded by dead brown plants and shrubs. One byproduct of this spraying project to which some thought should be given is the probable permanent destruction of many choice wildflowers along the roads such as the trilliums, clintonias, pyrolas, ladys' slippers and other orchids, etc. The only areas where I would give unqualified approval to such spraying is where such noxious weeds as burdocks and thistles have got out of control.

Miss May Armand mentions many flowers seen by the roadside in central New Brunswick in late July. Joe Pye Weed which will be very decorative until frost was just showing its purple corolla. St. John's Wort, Hop Clover and



White Sweet Clover were in bloom. The smaller Hop Clover forms a bright yellow carpet at many places along the edge of highways 1 and 2 in the south of the province. The White Sweet Clover is wide spread but some really spectacular plants may be seen in the new gravel along the Trans-Canada Highway near Cole's Island. It grows best in sand and gravel. Can anyone tell me where to find Rabbit-foot Clover? I saw it in this Province years ago but do not remember where.

Other conspicuous flowers by the roadside include Goldenrod just coming into bloom, Milkweed, Canada Lily, Black-eyed Susan, and Fireweed. The most conspicuous shrubs at this season are the Elders - the wild relatives of the horticultural Golden Elder. The Scarlet-berried Elder which blossomed early is covered with brilliant berries (drupes). The so-called Common Elder, which is abundant in some sections of central and southern New Brunswick and quite absent in others was still in bloom in mid-August - the purple-black berries being still to mature.

The flight of Scarlet Tanagers reported in our last number was even more extensive than expected, one being reported at Bathurst on June 4th. Miss White also reported a pair at Edmundston this year.

One of the most unusual birds reported was the Orchard Oriole. Two males in full adult plumage were reported near St. Andrews on June 6th and 7th by Mrs. Fred Nutter and Mrs. R. Foster Rigby. As these were adult males and as a Baltimore Oriole was seen at the same time on June 7th there can be little doubt of the accuracy of this observation. There are only two or three previous reports, all for Charlotte County, the most recent 1919. It is even very rare in Maine.

Miss Violet Gillett of Andover supplies another report on the effect of the cold spring weather on the warbler migration. There were hundreds of Black-throated Blue Warblers, many flocks seen in various sections of Andover and Perth at the same time, and they remained most of the last week of May. The great numbers of these and other warblers may also be correlated with the spread of the Spruce Budworm.

Further evidence on the increase of the Killdeer in the Province has been supplied by S.D. Whitman of Moncton. He saw the first one in that area last year; this year there have been three reports in Westmorland County and two in Albert County near Moncton. All in the nesting season. When we know that, although no doubt a few occurred, there were no records from New Brunswick except Grand Manan before 1945 the many reports in the Saint John valley, at Bathurst and now at Moncton suggest a very great increase.

My request for information on the Raccoon in northern New Brunswick has borne fruit. Miss Gillett reports them not uncommon around Andover and present at Nictau on the upper Tobique river. Mr. J.E. Picot saw one at Robertville northwest of Bathurst in November 1955 and states that there are now many reports in that area. In central and southern New Brunswick it must be increasing steadily. Until this summer I had not seen a Raccoon killed by a car on the highway. This year I have seen at least a dozen on highways 2 and 9.

A new hazard is reported on the Edmundston golf course this summer - Red Foxes "snitching" golf balls.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VII

September-October 1956

Number 5

F O R E W O R D

Fall is upon us and winter is very close at hand; the first few flakes of snow have fallen, and the garden flowers are mostly dead. How short a season summer really is in this latitude and how much shorter it appeared this year with the cold late spring. Many garden vegetables did not have time to mature and strawberries, raspberries and blueberries could all be picked at the same time. Raspberries could still be picked at September 1st in some places.

W.A. Squires  
Curator.

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The response to my request in the last number for information about Rabbit-foot Clover has been most interesting. Six persons wrote or telephoned about it but I found it near the homes of other readers whom I did not hear from. When I began to really look for it I found it myself in several places. It forms a carpet by the roadside in parts of York County but it is hard to identify from an automobile going at present day speeds.

Mrs. R. Foster Rigby adds the interesting comment that according to local tradition the Rabbit-foot Clover found at Bayside, Charlotte County, escaped from the gardens which Champlain's party planted in the area in 1604.

The reports received, some accompanied by specimens, are all from the southern half of the Province. I would be glad to receive any reports for parts of the Province not covered.

Charlotte County - Bayside, Bocabec and St. Andrews  
St. John County - Torryburn (herbarium specimen 1874)  
Kings County - Sussex (herbarium specimen 1924)  
Queens County - Gagetown and Upper Gagetown  
York County - Fredericton, Kingsclear, Long  
Creek, Barry and Pokiok  
Westmorland Co., - Salisbury and Cap Brulé  
Kent County - Bass River (herbarium specimen 1877)

All of our clovers - Rabbit-foot, Red, Alsike and White, as well as the three species of Yellow or Hop Clover and both the White and Yellow Sweet Clover have come in from Europe and Asia. It is easy enough to understand how those cultivated for hay and forage have spread but it is interesting to see how the others have got around as well.

Evening Grosbeaks seem to be increasing steadily as summer residents in northern New Brunswick. Mrs. A. B. Williston reported 20 at Newcastle in May and large groups in the woods forty miles from Newcastle in June, July and August. Others were reported in the Upper Miramichi valley near Blackville in June and July. Reports of Evening Grosbeaks continue to come in from the Tobique valley and other places in the northern countries where they have been recorded for the last ten summers.

Two recent recoveries of banded Evening Grosbeaks in the province have come to my attention. One banded in New Jersey in the winter of 1954 was found dead near Campbellton in July of this year according to a newspaper account. Another banded at Lunenburg, Massachusetts, Dec. 17, 1955 was found at Dalhousie with a broken wing on June 5, 1956. This latter record indicates a direct northerly migration to this new eastern breeding ground. I should add for those who have not followed the changing range of this bird that the very first evidence of it breeding east of northern Michigan was a report from this province about 16 years ago and the first winter record here was 1913.

This fall without any severe southern hurricanes we can record unusual birds without wondering if they were carried here by the wind. Thus two reports of male Eastern Towhees are of added significance. Miss Georgie Mears saw one at St. Andrews October 17th and Mrs. H.J. Waters reported one at Lancaster October 23rd. There are only four or five previous records for New Brunswick.

Miss May Armand found a nest with two eggs in it on August 31st. From the description it was almost undoubtedly a Savannah Sparrow's nest. This is by far the latest date for eggs of which I have a record. My latest previous date is July 30th. This bird is known to rear two broods and this pair must have lost their second brood and nested again.

Miss Armand reported a Hummingbird seen at Jacksonville, September 10th for a late record and a Kingbird on the same day. I have had later reports for both species other years but this is very near to the end of their season with us.

It is too late to say much about the Autumn colouring found on the leaves of so many of our trees and shrubs. Sometime I would like to make a survey and see how many species contribute to the brilliant display. This year the peak of the colour display seemed to me to be very brief in the south of the Province. As soon as it arrived a day's rain and a heavy frost bleached some of the leaves and brought down many of the others.

There is a great difference in the winter sleep of animals commonly called hibernation. Bears and Raccoons for example really only sleep as their breathing, heartbeat and temperature remain normal. Woodchucks or Groundhogs and Jumping Mice become almost inanimate. Breathing is reduced to a mere trickle of air, the pulse becomes very faint and the animal cools down below fifty-seven degrees, often to a low of forty-three, just eleven degrees above freezing. They stay in this condition over six months of the year here.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VII

November - December 1956

Number 6

F O R E W O R D

At this season of the year thousands of people throughout the United States and a small number in Canada engage in taking local bird counts. Many of these counts are published by the National Audubon Society of the United States, the Canadian Field-Naturalist and other publications.

For the National Audubon Society the count has to be made between December 22nd and January 1st and must cover one calendar day and an area fifteen miles in diameter or less.

No serious attempts have ever been made to make any such counts in New Brunswick. Two or three people have made one day reports but not exhaustive counts. A form is enclosed which lists practically all birds which can be found here in winter. If any one can find time to take a census in their community it will be published in the next number of this bulletin. Any one who would care to cooperate in a Saint John count on December 29th is invited to leave his name at the Museum office on the 27th or 28th. This form may also be used to record birds seen in any short period during the winter - valuable information for our files on New Brunswick birds.

W.A. Squires, Curator

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A fifty-year old late record for the Ruby-throated Hummingbird has been broken. William Moore saw one at Scotch Lake on October 16, 1905. Mrs. A.B. Williston saw one at Newcastle on October 28, 1956 and in a later letter reported one to November 1st, 1956. I was also much interested to learn that the Hummingbird is common at Newcastle in summer.

Another report from Mrs. Williston of special interest referred to several Martin houses full of Purple Martins at Newcastle year after year. With the exception of thirty years of spring records from Chatham this is the most northerly report of Martins for New Brunswick. If anyone has ever seen them in the four northerly counties I would like to hear about it as we are on the northern limit of this species here.

It is now a rare thrill for me to see a species of bird which I have never seen before. I had this pleasure on November 2nd near Fredericton when I saw my first American Three-toed Woodpecker, "Ladder-back" some of the old books call it. This was a female and noticeably smaller than the Arctic Three-toed which I have seen often. The black bars on the white back which make the "ladder" were very conspicuous.

Mourning Doves are recognized as game further south and west but here they are great rarities and there are not enough records to decide whether they are increasing or not. The latest report is one seen at Rothesay on November 27th by Mr. Leigh Devoe. This Dove is very slightly migratory and usually tries to spend the winter where it occurs in summer with fatal results.

At this season of the year a watch should be kept for a number of species of northern birds which may appear this far south in winter. Among these are the Rough-legged Hawk, Gyrfalcon, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Ivory Gull, Snowy Owl, Hawk Owl and Great Gray Owl.

What do you know about holly growing wild in New Brunswick? We have two members of the Holly Family here. You may not recognize them because the leaves turn brown and fall off early in the fall. The commonest is Ilex verticillata. I prefer the name Canada Holly for this but in spite of the fact that it is an Ilex the same as Christmas Holly some botanists refer to it only as Scarlet Winterberry or Black Alder. I was into several square miles of forest in November where this shrub was much more common than Common Alder. The scarlet berries tend to remain on the branches in the late fall and winter after the leaves fall. Our other holly is usually called False or Mountain Holly and I have never found it common. The berries of both may be preserved for interior decoration by applying a light coating of wax.

I have not had any fall or early winter records of the Evening Grosbeak in southern New Brunswick yet this season. They were breeding in the north of the province in great numbers last summer so they should not have far to come.

Great flocks of Starlings made their annual incursion on the Mountain Ash berries in the Saint John area. Although there was a great crop that would have persisted most of the winter in the years before the Starlings, and would have attracted and fed Robins, Grosbeaks, Waxwings and many other species, the trees are now bare. The Starling flocks could be numbered in thousands this year but larger flocks have been seen here.

Mrs. John Trigg of Buctouche reports an absence of Blue Jays there in November where for a number of years a flock of six to twelve have arrived in October and stayed to June. Many Blue Jays migrate. Perhaps all those here in summer go south and the ones seen in winter may come in from farther north. I have received increasing numbers of reports of Blue Jays in recent winters but this may not mean more Blue Jays. Blue Jays often winter in beech groves in a year when there is a good supply of nuts.

A Western or Arkansas Kingbird was at Deep Cove, Grand Manan, during the first two weeks of December and then was found dead. We have reports of four others 1937 to 1946 seen at Grand Manan or southern New Brunswick in July, September and October but December is extremely late for a bird which depends so largely on insects for food.

If as some people believe the abundance of Grouse runs in cycles, 1956 must have been a period of greater abundance or the top of the curve. I saw a number of male Spruce Grouse within five miles of Fredericton in November after the season for them was closed. In most of southern New Brunswick it has been my experience that this is a very scarce bird although it may be common in the northern interior. Ruffed Grouse were reported in greater numbers than usual in many areas.