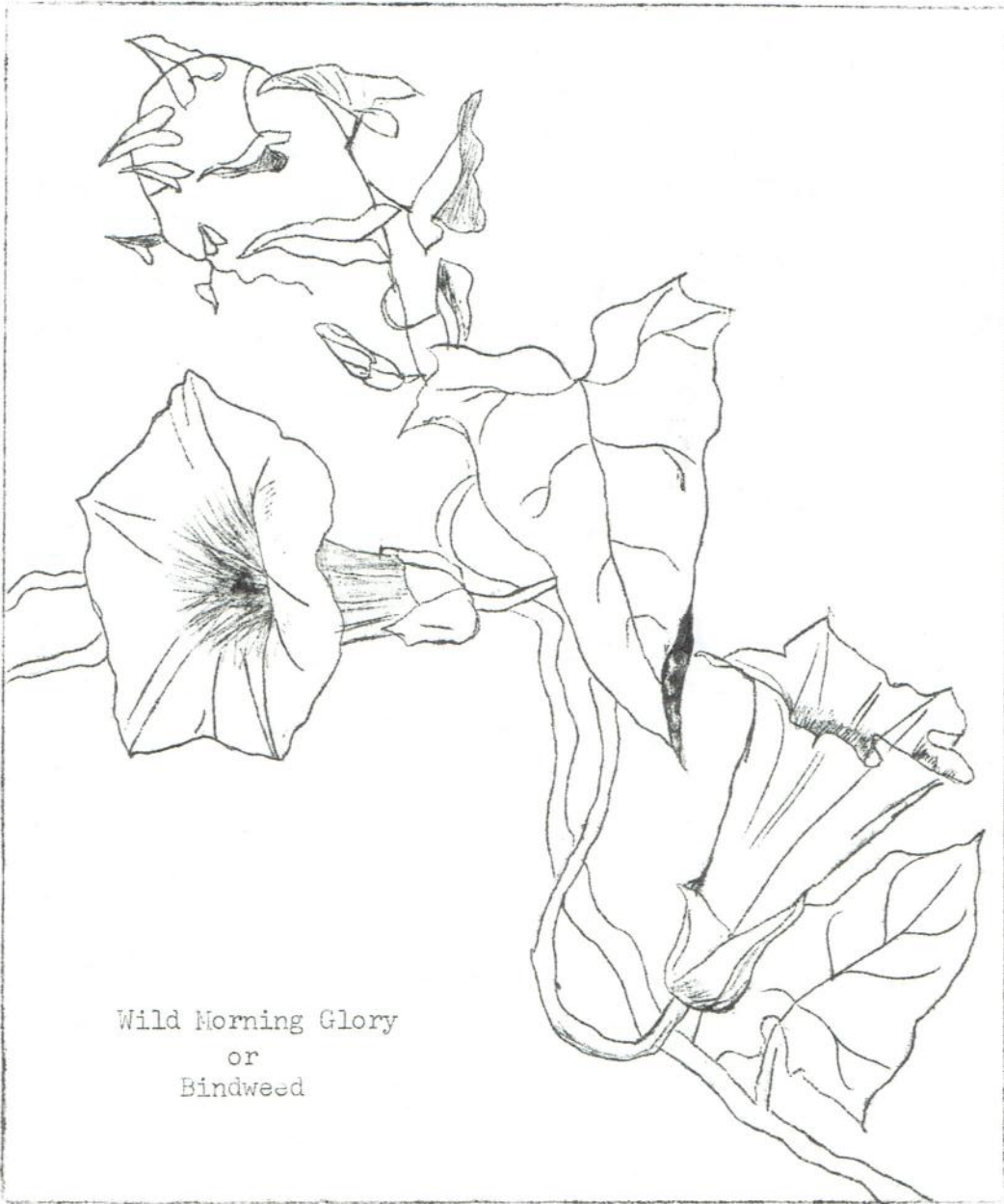


NATURE NEWS



Wild Morning Glory
or
Bindweed

ISSUED BY
THE NATURAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
OF
THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM
SAINT JOHN, N.B.

N A T U R E N E W S

Vol. VIII

January-February 1957

Number 1

F O R E W O R D

This number will be restricted almost entirely to provincial records of winter birds.

The circular requesting Christmas Bird Counts sent out with the last number was used to report the findings of a large party at Fredericton and by several individuals elsewhere. The Fredericton count will be given separately and the others included in a general list of birds seen between December 1st and February 14th.

For the benefit of readers outside of the Province I will give a word about the local winter conditions. Snowfall has not been excessive here but there was one protracted period of extreme cold when low records were broken throughout the province. Saint John recorded officially 23 degrees below zero the lowest since records were kept and at inland points the cold was much severer, 49 degrees below being recorded on an official thermometer at Sussex. Unofficial reports into the minus fifties were reported for several places and the cold continued for a week or more.

There must have been many bird deaths due to the cold. We know that many Starlings perished and as noted later a large flock of Cowbirds all died at St. Martins but the bird records received following the extreme cold show that many species remained healthy.

I hope to continue this winter listing of birds for several years so as to study trends and changes in population.

W.A. Squires
Curator.

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Fredericton, N.B. Dec. 26, 1956; 9.30 a.m. to 5.10 p.m.; clear; temp. 8° to 15°; wind N.W. 10-20 mph; 2-6 inches snow; rivers and streams frozen, rapids open; seven observers in three parties. Total mileage 110 1/2 (4 1/2 on foot, 106 by car).

Ruffed Grouse, 3; Domestic Pigeon, 53; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 6; Raven, 5; Am. Crow, 12; Black-capped Chickadee, 25; Brown-capped Chickadee, 6; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown Creeper, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Northern Shrike, 1; Common Starling, 7; English Sparrow, 110; Purple Finch, 5; Pine Grosbeak, 12; Redpoll, 8; Pine Siskin, 6; White-winged Crossbill, 50; Tree-Sparrow, 7; Snow Bunting, 100. Total species 23; about 426 individuals. Mr. and Mrs. N.R. Brown, Mr. Henrik Deichmann, Miss Jane McNeill, Mrs. W.R.D. McNeill, Mr. W. Austin Squires, Mrs. Bruce Wright.

WINTER BIRD LIST (December 1st 1956 - February 14, 1957)

<u>Canada Goose</u>			
Jan. 1	White Head, Grand Manan	20 plus	Arthur Wilson
<u>American Brant</u>			
Dec. 31	White Head, Grand Manan	33 plus	H. Cossaboom, J. Robinson
<u>Black Duck</u>			
Dec. 29	Black River, St.J. County	9	G. McLeod
Dec.	St. Martins	100 plus	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
Jan. 15	Salmon River, St.J. County	lots	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
Feb. 14	Saint John	37	W. Austin Squires
<u>American Goldeneye</u>			
Dec. 29	Black River	2	G. McLeod
Dec-Jan.	Saint John		
Feb. 14	Saint John	43	W. Austin Squires
<u>American Merganser</u>			
Dec-Jan thru	Edmundston	20	Miss L.J. White
<u>Sharp-shinned Hawk</u>			
Dec. 23	Fredericton	1	M. Moore
<u>Pigeon Hawk</u>			
Feb. 14	Saint John	1	R. Buckle
<u>Bald Eagle</u>			
Jan. 5	Black River	1	G. McLeod
Jan. 15	Salmon River	1	J.N. Bradshaw
Feb.	Saint John	1	W. Austin Squires
<u>Ruffed Grouse</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	3	Christmas Count
Dec. 29	Bloomfield Station	2	Mrs. L. Hoyt
<u>Hungarian Partridge</u>			
Dec-Jan thru	St. Martins	6	Mrs. Bradshaw
Dec. 25	Black River	1	G. McLeod
<u>Chukker Partridge</u>			
Jan.	St. Martins	3	Kaare Smith
(A newly liberated foreigner - several other uncertain reports may refer to this bird.)			
<u>Ring-necked Pheasant</u>			
Dec-Jan.	Newcastle	1	Mrs. K.A. Williston
Dec. 26	Fredericton	1	H. Deichmann
Jan. 24	Jacksonville	1	Miss M. Armand
Feb. 9	Moncton	1	Mrs. D. Layton
<u>Great Black-backed Gull</u>			
Dec. 26	Grand Manan	1	Elmer Wilcox
Dec. 29	Black River	50	G. McLeod
Dec-Feb.	Saint John	many	W. Austin Squires
<u>Herring Gull</u>			
Dec. 29	Black River	300	G. McLeod
Feb. 9	Moncton	76	Mrs. D. Layton
Dec-Feb.	Saint John	many	W. Austin Squires
<u>Saw-whet Owl</u>			
Feb.	Rothsay	1	Leigh Devoe

<u>Domestic Pigeon</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	53	Christmas Count
Dec. 29	Bloomfield Station	9	Mrs. L. Hoyt
Feb. 9	Moncton	21	Mrs. D. Layton
Dec-Feb.	Saint John	common	W. Austin Squires
<u>Hairy Woodpecker</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	1	H. Deichmann
Dec. 31	Bloomfield Station	2	Mrs. L. Hoyt
Dec-Jan.	Hampton Station	1	Mrs. Leatherbarrow
Feb. 4	Coles Island, Queens Co.	1	Miss Mary Foster
Feb. 9	Moncton	1	Mrs. D. Layton
Feb.	Ingleside	1	Mrs. McKinney
<u>Downy Woodpecker</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	1	Christmas Count
Jan-Feb.	Hampton Station	sev.	Mrs. J.O. McKenzie
<u>Arctic three-toed Woodpecker</u>			
Jan. 30	Jacksonville	1	Miss May Armand
<u>Western Kingbird</u>			
Dec. 17	Deep Cove, Grand Manan	1 (died)	Dr. R.M. Bigalow, K. Ingersoll
<u>Horned Lark s.sp.</u>			
Jan. 11	Salisbury	1	Miss A. Foster
Jan. 18	Moncton	2	W. Sears
<u>Bluejay</u>			
Dec-Feb.	Fredericton, Black River, Bloomfield Station, Edmundston, Jacksonville, Coles Island, Hampton Station, Moncton.		
<u>Canada Gray Jay</u>			
Dec-Jan.	Hampton Station	1	Mrs. Leatherbarrow
<u>Raven</u>			
Dec-Jan.	Fredericton, Salisbury, Black River, Bloomfield Station, Coles Island, Saint John		
<u>Crow</u>			
Dec-Jan.	Fredericton, Salisbury, Black River, Bloomfield Station, Edmundston, Coles Island, Woodstock, St. Martins		
<u>Black-capped Chickadee</u>			
Dec. 31	Bloomfield Station	4	Mrs. L. Hoyt
Feb.	Hampton Station	sev.	Mrs. J.O. McKenzie
Feb. 9	Moncton	4	Mrs. D. Layton
<u>Red-breasted Nuthatch</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	2	Christmas Count
<u>Brown Creeper</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	1	Christmas Count
<u>Robin</u>			
Jan. 14	Moncton	1	Mr. S.O. Whitman
Jan. 28	Saint John	1	Mrs. A.R. Marr
<u>Golden-crowned Kinglet</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	4	Christmas Count
<u>Cedar Waxwing</u>			
Jan. 28	Saint John	flock	Mrs. A.R. Marr
Feb. 10-20	Kinghurst	40-50	Mr. Wade
<u>Northern Shrike</u>			
Dec. 26	Fredericton	1	Christmas Count
Dec.	St. Martins	1	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
Jan. 15	Salmon River	1	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw

<u>Common Starling</u>	Dec-Feb.	Hampton, Coles Island, Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, Bloomfield Station, Black River, Jacksonville		
<u>English Sparrow</u>	Dec-Feb.	Hampton, Moncton, Black River, Jacksonville, Fredericton, Saint John		
<u>Bronzed Grackle</u>	Dec. 26	Moncton	1	H.O. Whitman
<u>Cowbird</u>	Jan. 5-20	St. Martins (all died in extreme cold)	100	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw Kaare Smith
	Jan. 16	Scotchtown, Queens Co.	1	C.H. Denton
<u>Evening Grosbeak</u>	Dec. 1	Hampton Station	2	Mrs. Leatherbarrow
	Dec.	Coles Island	sev.	Mrs. M. Foster
	Dec.	Newcastle	2 flocks	Mr. A.B. Williston
	Jan. 21	St. Martins	10	J.N. Bradshaw
	Jan. 23	Blissfield	1	Mrs. Bessie Witherell
<u>Purple Finch</u>	Dec. 26	Fredericton	5	Christmas Count
	Feb.	Hampton Station	1	Mrs. J.O. McKenzie
<u>Pine Grosbeak</u>	Dec. 2	Salisbury	8	Miss A. Foster
	Dec. 20	Fredericton	12	Christmas Count
	Dec.	Coles Island	sev.	Miss M. Foster
	Jan. 15	St. Martins	15	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
<u>Redpoll</u>	Dec. 20	Fredericton	8	Christmas Count
<u>Pine Siskin</u>	Dec. 1-23	Hampton Station	20-30	Mrs. Leatherbarrow
<u>Goldfinch</u>	Feb. 6	Arthurette	1	Miss Daisy Mills
	Feb.	Hampton Station	sev.	Mrs. J.O. McKenzie
<u>White-winged Crossbill</u>	Dec. 26	Fredericton	50	Christmas Count
	Feb. 9	Moncton	2	Mrs. D. Layton
<u>Slate-coloured Junco</u>	Dec-Jan.	St. Martins	sev.	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
	Jan. 15	Belmont	1	Mrs. D. Crosbie
	Feb. 9	Moncton	1	Mrs. D. Layton
<u>Tree Sparrow</u>	Dec. 26	Fredericton	7	Christmas Count
	Jan. 12	Salmon River	sev.	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
	Jan. 13	St. Martins	sev.	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
	Jan-Feb.	Hampton Station	sev.	Mrs. J.O. McKenzie
	Feb. 9	Moncton	1	Mrs. D. Layton
<u>Song Sparrow</u>	Jan. 13-20	St. Martins	1	Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw
<u>Lapland Longspur</u>	Dec. 31	Bloomfield Station	16	Mrs. L. Hoyt
<u>Snow Bunting</u>	Dec. 26	Fredericton	100	Christmas Count
	Jan. 20	Moncton	6	W. Sears
	Feb.	Edmundston	sev.	Miss L.J. White

N A T U R E N E W S

Vol. VII

March-April 1957

Number 2

F O R E W O R D

The response to our winter bird list published in the last number was very gratifying and we should be able to get a much better coverage for a similar list next winter.

Our next number should be devoted in large part to spring and early summer flowers if I get enough notes from observers. I would like especially to hear of places where Showy Lady's Slippers, Hepaticas and Marsh Marigold's may be found.

W.A. Squires, Curator

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The buds are swelling, the sap is running, the pussywillows are out, the daffodils and early tulips are pushing up their green leaves and the early birds are singing - it is spring. There may still be a few snowstorms but the promise of another warm summer season seems about to be fulfilled.

I had earlier reports of pussywillows and there are usually a few of them out of their covers from late November on through the winter but it was April 3rd when I saw the first bush covered with white pussies.

The Skunk seemed to be abroad earlier than usual this spring but we have no dates for other years. I saw the first one dead on the highway on March 11th.

David Christie of East Riverside reported a Bat on March 29th. This is the earliest report I have ever had.

I have not heard any reports about Panthers for some time. Either none have been seen or else they are no longer news.

Has anyone news of large herds of deer this year like the ones reported from the Camp Utopia area in recent years?

With a few species of birds it is hard to be quite sure whether individuals have been here all winter or whether they are spring migrants. A few Robins remained all winter in southern New Brunswick. Mrs. Bradshaw reported several small flocks at St. Martins. The earliest migrant Robins reported may have been for March 31st at Ingleside by Mrs. McKinney. Within a few days they were seen everywhere.

Earlier migrants were Horned Larks at Lancaster on March 4th reported by Mrs. Vernon Watters, Redwings at St. Martins March 18th and at Ingleside March 24th. Mrs. McKinney also reported Phoebes at Ingleside March 24th.

Bronzed Grackles (Blackbirds) always appear in large flocks in the spring and I seem to have seen more than usual this year. The earliest report I have is for Salisbury where Miss Alice Foster saw about 50 on March 24th.

Mrs. D.E. Crosby reported a Song Sparrow at Belmont on March 21st and Mrs. Bradshaw saw several at St. Martins March 25th. David Christie saw them as early as March 20th at Rothesay. Individuals of this species may have wintered. I heard one singing on April 15th for the first time.

Canada Geese sometimes come back to the lower St. John Valley as early as February. I believe there was an earlier report in the press but March 26th when David Christie saw three at Rothesay is the earliest date I have for this area. Several were seen at St. Martins March 15th. As thousands winter in southwestern Nova Scotia, Canada Geese may stray to this area at almost any time in the winter.

One of the most unusual reports that has come in is two American Egrets seen at Torryburn, Saint John County on April 8th. This report seems trustworthy enough and actually one was collected in Grand Manan on April 12th in 1930 so the date is not as unusual as it might appear.

Birds were quite plentiful during the winter in the south of the province but it would seem to have been quite different in the northern counties. Miss Violet Gillett at Andover writing at the end of March asks "What has happened to our birds? This winter there were weeks that we did not have even a sparrow or a bluejay at the feed boxes and never more than two bluejays at a time. Only once has a woodpecker come for the suet and except for a few purple finches seen a week ago those have been all the birds we have seen. There have been none of the big flocks of snow-birds which have been on the roads the last few years."

Last year I saw countless thousands of Redpolls along the highways in the St. John Valley moving northward in February and March. This year scarcely one was to be seen.

The Evening Grosbeak was another species much scarcer than usual this past winter. Only a few small flocks were reported to me but on April 9th a flock numbering several hundreds appeared at Fredericton. Reports subsequent to this date would be of interest as these may be returning to breeding places in northern New Brunswick.

The Pine Grosbeak according to reports seems to have been commoner than usual. In addition to the reports listed in the last number Mrs. Bradshaw reported them at Salmon River, St. John County on March 12th.

N A T U R E N E W S

Vol. VIII

May - June 1957

Number 3

F O R E W O R D

For this number I have given special attention to the spring wild flowers, getting dates for the first blossoms in different parts of the province. I have had a great response from readers for this number but very little coverage for the north of the Province.

From the great abundance of bird records I am able to find space for only a few of unusual significance.

I have rather neglected including notes on insects. If anything of general interest can be located it will be used in the next number.

W.A. Squires, Curator

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The Coltsfoot, Tussilago farfara, is undoubtedly the earliest blossom to appear in New Brunswick. It is, however, unknown to most sections of the province having been accidentally introduced from Europe around the seaports. It was most probably in bloom in sunny exposures at Saint John in March as usual but it was not reported to me until early April. A specimen sent in from Seal Cove, Grand Manan, established a new station there although Coltsfoot was previously known from several places on the island.

Miss Armand reported Blue Violets in bloom at Jacksonville as early as April 17th. This was very early as the first reports for both White and Blue Violets in the south of the Province were at White's Bluff, Kings County (Mrs. R.J. Collins) on May 4th and at Ingleside (Mrs. M.E. McKinney) and Kingshurst (David Christie) May 8th.

Daphne, the beautiful shrub of European origin which is escaped in parts of southern New Brunswick, was pronounced in full bloom at Nauwigewauk April 28th (Miss Ethel Duffy) and was well past its best at Saint John by May 6th.

Mayflowers (the name given to Trailing Arbutus in New Brunswick) were in full bloom at Salmon River, St. John County on April 30th (Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw) and at Jacksonville May 1st (Miss Armand).

Red Trilliums and Dutchman's Breeches were also in bloom at White's Bluff on May 4th.

I saw Dog-toothed Violet (Yellow-Adder's Tongue) at Petersville and Fredericton on May 8th but Mrs. Bradshaw found it at St. Martins on May 4th and Mrs. Leonard Hoyt near Norton on April 25th.

The Shadbush (Bilberry at Saint John and Indian Pear in Nova Scotia) was just coming into bloom in southern New Brunswick on May 11th and 12th.

Mrs. Hoyt reported Wood Anemones at Norton April 19th and Painted Trilliums May 12th.

Bluets were in bloom at Perry Point, King's County on May 5th (Christie). This dainty little flower continues to bloom well into the summer but is not nearly as common in New Brunswick as it is farther south in Maine.

On May 16th or 17th Mrs. M.E. McKinney showed me an unusual form of the Red or Purple Trillium found near Saint John. In this form the petals were creamy yellow. This trillium elsewhere in its range has two forms forma luteum which is clear yellow and forma albiflorum which is white. Neither of these forms has been reported to me in New Brunswick before and this specimen seems almost intermediate between the two.

The Marsh Marigold is a spring flower not very familiar to observers in the south of New Brunswick. I understand that it is much commoner in the northern counties. I saw a small patch in bloom in Madawaska County on May 31st.

The spring chorus of toads, frogs, and hylas from the woodside ditches and ponds got under way about the last week of April. When I was in the woods on the evening of May 9th Wood Frogs were in motion everywhere and on May 11th a Green Frog was brought in to me at Fredericton. The high shrill trills which are usually most common are toads. The tiny Hylas (tree toads, or tree frogs) have a high-pitched peep and hence are often called Spring Peepers. The background notes in the chorus in a lower key are the frogs. Another group of amphibians, the salamanders and newts, although silent return to the water in early spring to lay their eggs. I have not personally observed them very often in spring and would be glad to receive further information about them.

There have been a number of bird records which merit special mention.

The Evening Grosbeaks which have only been breeding in northern New Brunswick for about fifteen years and which were seen last summer as far south as Blackville are being seen much farther south this year in mated pairs and nesting in the south of the province should be found. I saw them at Fredericton continually until May 26th. On May 22nd Melvin Moore reported them numerous at Pokiok, Temple and Meductic in York County; Don MacDougall saw two or three at Sackville May 2nd and Mrs. Hoyt reported a pair near Norton, Kings County, May 27th. Writing on June 3rd from Newcastle Mrs. A.B. Williston wrote "there are four Evening Grosbeaks about our yard." On June 6th Mr. & Mrs. J.D. MacLean saw four male Evening Grosbeaks on the road near Hampstead in Queens County.

Less than thirty years ago the breeding habits of the Evening Grosbeak were noted as "unknown" so that undoubtedly there is still much to learn about them.

Several Scarlet Tanagers have been reported. D. Kermode Parr saw one in Odell Park, Fredericton, on May 25th and Mrs. Williston saw one in Northumberland County which had been killed at a picture window. Miss Georgie Mears saw one at St. Andrews on June 5th and reported that Mrs. Harry Bartlett saw one at Bayside, Charlotte County on June 2nd. They seem to be much commoner than in any year before 1956. Last year a freak storm caught a lot in migration and scattered them over the northeastern states and the Atlantic provinces.

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak seen at Fredericton on May 11th by Mr. Parr was the earliest report I have ever had for this species.

A Brown Thrasher was seen at St. Martins May 10th. It was seen again on May 14th and heard on May 27th.

The Yellow Palm Warbler maintained its reputation as the earliest arrival of the warbler tribe. Mrs. Fred Nutter reported it at St. Andrews April 23rd followed by the Myrtle Warbler on April 29th. Mrs. Hoyt at Norton reported the largest number of warbler species - eleven - Nashville, Black-throated Green, Northern Yellow-throat, Wilson's, Black and White, Chestnut-sided, Yellow, Blackburnian, Redstart, Canada and a very unusual individual which corresponded in most points except the wings to the Golden-winged Warbler.

Are Hummingbirds particularly scarce this year? Only three correspondents mentioned them at all and the earliest date was May 25th more than a week later than average.

Melvin Moore reported a pair of Crows nesting in the tops of the tall elms in Fredericton and stated that there had been crows in the area in summer for several years but that this is the first time a nest has been located. Crows do not appear adverse to an urban life if sufficient food is available. A pair nested in a cedar tree behind the Museum building here in Saint John a few years ago.

I can report on only three species of butterflies. Miss Arnand noted both the Cabbage and Tortoise-Shell butterflies on May 11th at Jacksonville and I saw the first Tiger Swallowtail at Fredericton on May 26th.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VIII

July-August 1957

Number 4

F O R E W O R D

Many observers have sent in information on birds, flowers, insects, and animals which they have seen during the last two or three months. All of these reports are of great interest and although I have only been able to use the outstanding items even reports on the commonest of species are useful.

For reports in the next two months late records for common species of birds will be very welcome.

W.A. Squires, Curator.

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To a naturalist there is no experience as satisfying as identifying a new bird or plant or animal. On August 15th I noted tall plants with long spikes of magenta flowers blooming in profusion along the side of the St. John River just north of Oromocto. If I have seen this species before I must have classified it as Fireweed without stopping to investigate. This time I collected it and found that I had Purple Loosestrife, a very attractive plant which is restricted to such a swampy environment.

Two or three years ago I mentioned the predominance of yellow in the coloration of the late summer wild flowers. This seems quite applicable to the St. John River valley after late July when the Goldenrod begins to come into bloom. Even here, however, there are great patches of the magenta of the Fireweed and the purple of Joe-Pye-Weed and numerous white species. During a visit to the counties of Northumberland, Kent and Westmorland from August 4th to 9th I was struck by the almost complete absence of yellow flowers in many districts. The Joe-Pye-Weed and Fireweed (Willow Herb) seemed much more common than in the southwestern part of the Province and even the Purple Vetch seemed more abundant. The season may be later in these counties but there did not seem to be very much Goldenrod to come into bloom later. If this impression was accurate this part of the Province is fortunate as Goldenrod has become a serious pest in central New Brunswick.

Here and there by the roadside the wild Swamp Rose (*R. nitida*) appears and on the dykelands the Common Wild Rose (*R. virginiana*) is more common. White, however, was the most common colour of the wild flowers in these counties. White Asters and Fleabanes of several species, Pearly Everlasting, Boneset, Caraway, Common Elder, and even Cotton-grass in the swamps were some of the white flowers to be seen. One of the most widespread and conspicuous plants in the roadside ditches and swamp and marsh areas of eastern New Brunswick is Water Hemlock or Spotted Cowbane. This is one of the most poisonous plants in Canada the root proving deadly to both man and beast.

Have you ever observed the Hummingbird's "pendulum flight"? Miss Armand of Jacksonville gives a good description of this amazing performance. I have only seen it once myself. This is a display put on by the male for the

benefit of his lady. It takes several forms but usually he swings in an arc of a vertical circle as if suspended on an invisible thread. He moves so fast that it is next to impossible to see that he is not flying sidewise but actually turns around at the top of each swing. Miss Armand also notes that Hummingbirds visited her Delphiniums in early August as early as 5 AM fast time and as late as 9.45 PM.

In a fine list of birds observed in Madawaska County mostly at Baker Lake Miss L.J. White includes at least two records of very special interest. She reported 5 black-crowned Night Herons breeding on an island in Baker Lake on June 16th. This is the first record we have of this species north of Woodstock in western New Brunswick and we have only three or four more breeding records for the Province.

Charles Foss saw five male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Jacquet Head, Restigouche County, on June 12th and Miss White reported 12 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, adults and young being fed, at Baker Lake on July 16th. I have had a number of reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks being seen in Madawaska and Restigouche Counties in former years but actual breeding records for the Province are very scarce.

I have personally seen Evening Grosbeaks in so many places since writing the note on them in our last number that an addition to it is necessary. Two males were reported at Loch Lomond, Saint John County, on June 16th, the latest record for the extreme south of the Province. On June 29th travelling from Fredericton to Newcastle I saw without stopping 28 Evening Grosbeaks in seven parties between Astle and Doaktown. In much the same area but deep in the woods at South Lake on the SW Miramichi Mr. A.E. Williston in early June saw a great many Evening Grosbeaks in flocks of 20 and 30. On July 11th David Christie saw a pair at Wirral, Queens County. Earl Godfrey of the National Museum was in the northern part of the Province in the middle of July and was amazed at the number of Evening Grosbeaks noted, especially along the St. Leonard - Campbellton highway. Actually in the last six to eight years we have come to expect to see Evening Grosbeaks almost as often as Robins in that area.

I have been disappointed at not finding a nest or young of the Evening Grosbeaks in the south of the Province this year and not having any reported to me.

Mrs. James Bradshaw of St. Martins reports that Mr. Bradshaw found a nest of Arctic Three-toed Woodpeckers at Anderson Brook, Kings County, on June 19th and that he had seen quite a few of both the American and the Arctic species in that area in the preceding two or three weeks. Apparently this hilly area like our northern highlands is a good place to find these rarer woodpeckers as the Bradshaws have seen them quite often during the last ten years. It is probable that the American Three-toed Woodpecker, for which we have no provincial breeding records, breeds here as well as the Arctic.

Unusually large numbers of Red Admiral Butterflies appeared in June and attracted much attention. One observer near Saint John reported them so common one morning as to literally cover lilac bushes. These butterflies were unusually abundant throughout the Province and the same thing was reported for the State of Maine as well.

NATURE NEWS

Vol. VIII

September-October 1957

Number 5

F O R E W O R D

By letter, by telephone and by personal visits I have had a good many reports on and questions about birds, animals, flowers, etc., during the last few months. The items of more general interest or of an unusual nature are reported below.

To reduce our remainder of this useful book the Museum has decided to offer 300 copies of "The Birds of New Brunswick" published in 1952 to schoolteachers and pupils and readers of "Nature News" for \$1.00, half-price. Requests will be filled in order while they last. Please mention "Nature News" when you order.

W.A. Squires, Curator.

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Mother Nature used a lavish paint brush this fall and the colour display put on by our maples, sumacs, cherries, birches and poplars surpassed anything seen in recent years. The dry sunshiny summer followed by a cold week at the end of August and an unusually mild and sunny September and October supplied the optimum conditions for the deposit of the chemicals in the leaves that form the brilliant scarlets, oranges and yellows.

Do you know over how little of the earth's surface this phenomenon of autumn colour is found? A recent number of "Natural History" has a fine article on the subject illustrated with maps. Autumn colour in eastern North America is found from northern New Brunswick and Gaspé south to the Gulf of Mexico, dogwood, gumwood and tupelo turning red in the south. Autumn coloured foliage is also found in a limited area of western Europe with the best displays on the slopes of the Alps and in the valleys of the Rhine and Danube. In the British Isles the moist climate restricts the colours to pale yellows and bronzes. The only other area in the northern hemisphere is found in eastern China and part of Japan. In the southern hemisphere autumn colour is found in southern Chile, part of Tasmania and the southern tip of New Zealand - a total area not much greater than New Brunswick.

We have mentioned Evening Grosbeaks in nearly every recent number of this bulletin but can not leave them out this time. They had a very successful breeding season in the northern half of the province and apparently bred in some localities further south although no definite records have been received. About the first of September large flocks were reported from many parts of central and southern New Brunswick.

H.C. White reported large flocks in late August near Petitcodiac stripping the bushes of dried choke cherries and cracking the pits to feed on the meat inside. This is a common food habit of this bird. Miss

Grace A. Smith reported large flocks of Evening Grosbeaks at Fredericton during the first two weeks of September, 12 being on a bird bath at once. D. Kermode Parr of Fredericton complained early in September that everyone else was seeing Evening Grosbeaks but they had passed him by. On September 14th to 16th he saw enough to satisfy him. I have had few reports of an Evening Grosbeak invasion in the Saint John area and apparently they have not been numerous in the Moncton area as Fred Bone reported two seen September 30th as the first and last seen to that date.

Possibly it is the warm fall but more likely just the fact that observers are reporting what they see, anyway we are getting better seasonal coverage for several species than was published in "The Birds of New Brunswick" five years ago. Kermode Parr reported a female Baltimore Oriole at Fredericton August 31st a week later than my 1949 date for the same place but Fred Bone saw a male at Riverview Heights, Albert County September 7th. Fred Bone also reported a male Scarlet Tanager at Riverview Heights September 14th to replace my indefinite July 1948 reference.

Mrs. J.N. Bradshaw who reported the very rare Brown Thrasher at St. Martins May 10th to 12th 1957, for an earliest date reported one at Salmon River, St. John County September 27th to October 3rd very much later than the previous date of July 15th.

There was a Mockingbird at St. Martins reported by Kaare Smith in the middle of October. Most of the few stray Mockingbirds reported in New Brunswick through the years have been seen from October to January. This bird migrates very little and tries to winter here. Individuals have also been recorded in Prince Edward Island and Gaspé in years past.

Several birds reported from near Norton were undoubtedly Yellow-headed Blackbirds as there is no other bird similarly marked. In July 1956 a black bird with a yellow head was seen in a marsh near Norton with Redwings. In June 1957 another was seen and another on August 11th, 1957. Mrs. Joan E. Hoyt saw the last one and reported all three. All were seen within two or three miles along the Kennebecasis River. This is a western bird but it has had a long list of casual or accidental occurrences in the east. There is only one previous sight record and no specimen for New Brunswick.

The early fall saw great concentrations of birds migrating or assembling for migration. Robins, White-throated Sparrows, Juncos and Myrtle Warblers seemed unusually common. Olive-backed Thrushes, Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and several other warblers were reported by many observers. Perhaps in the unusually dry season these birds congregated where water was available and were easily seen or perhaps the spread of the Spruce Budworm has supplied so much more food that there has been an increase in the number of birds.

Did you ever see a snake egg? I have always known that some snakes bear living young while others lay eggs but I did not recognize one when it arrived in the mail. This egg was an oval white sac about an inch and a half long and was dug up in a potato patch in September. It was probably laid by a Green Grass Snake and the egg contained a small snake three and a half inches long which would have emerged next spring.

F O R E W O R D

At this season of the year thousands of enthusiastic people across the United States and Canada are looking forward to taking part in the Christmas Bird Count in their locality just as eagerly as the kiddies are looking forward to Christmas itself. The dates set for this count by the National Audubon Society are for any one calendar day between December 21st, 1957 and January 1st, 1958.

The National Audubon Society published 535 lists for last Christmas with as many as 55 observers participating in several of the counts - a total of at least 10,000 observers. This is only a fraction of the counts made as nearly every nature and ornithological publication includes a number each year.

I asked for reports of counts made in this province last year and had some noteworthy returns. A group of seven at Fredericton recorded 23 species and 426 individual birds and there were quite a number of reports from individuals in other parts of the Province. Altogether I was able to compile a winter list of 48 species of birds. This year I hope to be able to make a count in the Saint John area on December 30th.

There are still copies of "Birds of New Brunswick" available at half-price, one dollar.

W.A. Squires, Curator.

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There is a special thrill in meeting one of our larger wild animals that is peculiarly its own. One morning early this fall while driving along the main highway less than five miles from the Museum in a light rain and fog I saw standing at the edge of the pavement silhouetted against the mist a magnificent bull moose with a fine set of antlers. There is great pressure on the government to permit the hunting of moose again but to me an occasional sight such as this is worth any number of dead carcasses in the woods. On the other hand while admiring the moose we should treat it with all the respect to which it is due as on occasion it is one of our most dangerous wild animals. Two young men who met four moose in the woods about four miles from Fredericton early in November had reason to be worried because there were no trees nearby large enough to climb.

I had a personal experience this fall that still has me puzzled. I was on the shore of a small lake in a sphagnum bog. I was convinced that there was no fish or other life except insects in it but apparently I was wrong. I was watching a pair of Black Ducks about 150 feet from shore when they seemed to be in difficulties. After a lot of squawking and fluttering one got into the air and flew off but try as it would the other could not get

out of the water. It was pulled under several times, then disappeared for several minutes and came up about 100 feet away and after a final struggle disappeared for good. What happened? Was there a monster of a Snapping Turtle in the lake a month late in hibernating? I would welcome an account of similar experiences or any other comments.

Pine Grosbeaks seem to be unusually common this year. Mr. Lloyd Machum reported large numbers in Moncton in September and October. David Christie saw several at Kingshurst, Kings County, November 4th to 13th and Mr. Dickson reported them at Ingleside December 5th. I have had several other reports by telephone so that they seem to be quite wide-spread.

The comparatively mild fall may account for a lot of late records for summer birds. A few of the Myrtle Warblers which were so common early in the fall remained late in November. Mrs. Fred Nutter reported three near St. Andrews November 11th. David Christie also had one at Kingshurst November 27th. He also reported a male Wilson Warbler on October 30th and 31st and another warbler which he identified as a Nashville was seen from November 17th to 30th and was eating fat and bread crumbs, a strange diet for a warbler.

A new late date for the Baltimore Oriole is September 14th when Mrs. Fred Nutter saw one near St. Andrews. This is the third extension of fall season for this species in one year.

One of the most surprising reports we have had this season came from Miss MacCoubrey at the East Saint John Hospital. On November 21st she saw a Crested Flycatcher and had an opportunity to study it for some time. Even in summer this is an uncommon bird but the occasional individual of other flycatcher species remains long after the season for "flies" is over. The only other late date for this bird is one in the Moses collection taken at Grand Manan on December 7th, 1928.

Mrs. Foster Rigby of St. Andrews writes about seeing an animal feeding on or around the grass in her yard about eight times in August and September. The description of the brown fur as covered with long black guard hairs and the rat-like tail makes it seem most probable that this was a muskrat varying his diet with plants not to be found in his usual watery environment.

Late flying butterflies have not received much attention but Mrs. Rigby reported a few Red Admiral Butterflies on September 29th - apparently a second generation since they were extremely numerous in June - and Mrs. Nutter saw a Monarch Butterfly on October 6th. Both reports are for St. Andrews. The Monarch Butterfly which occurs in such great numbers in some parts of North America and which migrates going south in the fall and the female returning north in the spring to lay its eggs is comparatively scarce in most parts of New Brunswick.

If you have a Balsam Fir Christmas Tree this year look it over carefully. If the tips of the branches do not seem to have enough needles chances are that you are having first hand experience with the Spruce Budworm which has been so much in the news.