

FEEDER REPORT

COLD WEATHER VISITORS AT CROSSROADS FEEDER by Arlene MacGuigan



On the morning of Jan. 18, 1982 -- the coldest day recorded on the Island since 1877 -- we had our first close-up look at a Snow Bunting. It spent the daylight hours of the storm perched in the spruces overlooking the feeder outside the kitchen window and, making frequent trips down to eat with the House Sparrows, Starlings and Blue Jays. That same morning we found a sparrow dead at the back door. The bunting returned the next day, but not since.

On the previous day, Jan. 17, a covey of ten Gray Partridge arrived in the yard, nervously circled the house, then left. Three days later they returned, but this time there were only nine. They fed on the grain beneath the feeder, and have returned to feed several times a day ever since. Their numbers dwindled to eight, then to seven. Today, Jan. 30, the number is still seven.

On Wednesday, Jan. 20, as I opened the door to let my little boy out to play, I was surprised to see a hawk with a starling in its claws, not three feet from the back door. A number of starlings had been eating at the feeder nearby, and obviously the hawk had plucked one from there. It remained in the snow and began to kill the starling -- totally unconcerned that I was only a few feet away and watching him. The children were upset by the episode, so I tried to chase the hawk, hoping it would drop the starling. It did not let go, but flew a few feet away, watching me. I got my bird book and found that it was a male Sharp-shinned Hawk. Eventually it flew to the neighbours' lilac hedge to have its supper in peace. Two days later at 9 a.m. the hawk returned to the feeder, snatched a starling, flew several feet away beside our picnic table and settled down in the snow to have breakfast. It remained about 30 minutes. No other birds were seen in the yard or at the feeder until the following afternoon.

BILL REDDIN FEEDER AT TEA HILL. On the very cold day of Jan. 18 the following birds were seen: 13 Gray Partridge, 12 Blue Jay, 1 American Crow, 12 Black-capped Chickadee, 30 Evening Grosbeak, 2 Slate-colored Junco. An owl was also heard close by at night.

HOLMAN FEEDER ON NORTH RIVER ROAD IN CHARLOTTETOWN. These birds were present during January: 4 Rock Dove, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 2 American Crow, 3 Black-capped Chickadee, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 15-20 Starling, 12 House Sparrow, 30-40 Evening Grosbeak, 1 Common Redpoll, 8-10 American Goldfinch.

CLARK FEEDER IN INDIAN RIVER. Writing on Feb. 19th Mrs. Clark reports the following recent bird visitors to their feeder or in the vicinity of their yard: 4 Black Duck in the brook (Feb. 17), 4 (2m + 2f) Red-breasted Merganser (Feb. 8), 1 Goshawk (Jan. 31), 1 Red-tailed Hawk (Jan. 31), 1 Mourning Dove (more than 60 had been present until mid January when all but one disappeared during a period of extremely cold weather), 2 Hairy Woodpecker, 2 Downy Woodpecker, 3 doz. Blue Jay, 2 Common Crow, 12+ Black-capped Chickadee, Boreal Chickadee, 2 doz. House Sparrow, 4 Common Redpoll, 18 Dark-eyed Junco, 1 Song Sparrow. Mrs. Clark also mentions that so far no Evening Grosbeaks have shown up although some which hatched there stayed until December. Two years ago the wintering flocks arrived in December and last year they came in January.

DUMVILLE FEEDER ON SUNSET DRIVE IN CHARLOTTETOWN. On Feb. 8 regular visitors included 6+ Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, 2 White-breasted Nuthatch, 20 Evening Grosbeak, and Dark-eyed Junco. One Red-breasted Nuthatch had also been coming regularly and 4 Common Redpoll showed up that day.

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