

of blood-sucking mosquitoes, for which the island is famous, had not yet emerged. In fact, insects in general were notably scarce. Light traps set up after dark to attract night flying species, procured only the occasional early June Bug and spring moths. Undoubtedly, this would change with the onset of summer.

Low lying ground predominates the island and freshwater marshes occur throughout - explaining why the island is a haven for mosquitoes. No permanent streams are found on the island although at least two former diggings from oil exploration activities in the 1940's have created small freshwater ponds. Thus, the island appears to offer suitable amphibian habitat although, despite concerted efforts, no sign of frogs, toads or salamanders could be found. The silence at night in the vicinity of the marshes was in eerie contrast to mainland P.E.I. marshes ringing with the chorus of courting amphibians at this time of year. Apparently amphibians did not occur on Governor's Island when it was formed, and, since they cannot cross salt water or ice they never colonized the island.

Typical of islands, the flora and fauna is noticeably impoverished compared to adjacent mainland localities, but no less interesting. A list of the trees found on the island shows only 10 species, although only the white spruce and trembling aspen predominate. Dominant shrub growth included wild rose, spirea, bayberry and alder. Thickets of raspberry were widespread and, combined with stinging nettles and the thorns of the roses, they made walking across the island difficult at times.

The mammalian component of the island is particularly low. Only two species were confirmed - the meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) and the snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*) - although other small rodents and shrews may have escaped our notice. No red squirrels, eastern chipmunks, foxes, etc. were found although, unlike the amphibians, the chance for these mammals to reach the island is greater.

The most prevalent mammals at Governor's Island are marine species. Harbour and Grey seals occurred all around the island and were constant companions as we walked along the shores. Although no accurate count was possible, 50+ seals were estimated with more Grey Seals than Harbour Seals usually seen. To our surprise the seals were the most vocal of the island's inhabitants. Sitting on the shore at night under the stars listening to the roars and bellows of a herd of seals hauled out on a reef, was an experience not easily forgotten.

If seals dominate the island's marine environment, birds dominate the terrestrial habitats. A total of 37 species was recorded on the island and in the surrounding waters. Great Blue Herons have established a large breeding colony in the main woodland since the mid 1970's and, although no accurate count was made, it was estimated to contain 250 (1981 census) nests. While many herons were seen along the shores of the island, the majority appeared to seek feeding grounds on mainland P.E.I., and there was a constant procession back and forth across the bay. Many of the species seen on the island were evidently transient, that is merely crossing the island en route to P.E.I. A Marsh Hawk and later a Chimney Swift were typical in that they were sighted flying lengthwise down the island (along the old aircraft runway) until they reached the northeast corner, whereupon they headed out over the water towards Pownal. Actual breeding species were much fewer but some suspected breeding species included red-breasted mergansers, common grackles, robins, common yellowthroat, yellow warbler, song sparrow, swamp sparrow, savannah sparrow, bank swallow and red-winged blackbird.

Governor's Island is a special place for wildlife, suiting the needs of its inhabitants superbly. As transient visitors to the island ourselves, we left with the feeling that the island truly belongs to the seals, herons and cormorants that make their homes there.

Be sure to attend the November 1, 1983 meeting for a slide presentation on Governor's Island.