

Additional species were observed within three days of the Count Day and thus can be included in the Count Period. These additional species were seen by David Smith: Goshawk, Great Horned Owl, Snowy Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Common Grackle, Evening Grosbeak. The area is really too large to be done by one team, so we hope to get two or three groups of observers mobile next year.

Kathy Martin  
Compiler

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### The Other Islands

Despite the widely-held belief to the contrary, Prince Edward Island is not the only island in the world! Indeed, P.E.I. is but one of many hundreds of islands scattered throughout the Gulf of St. Lawrence which share basically similar climates, topographies, and geological history.

The most important force shaping the relief of the Gulf and its islands has been that of the St. Lawrence River, whose discharge has carved a deep trench across the northern Gulf which continues out the Cabot Strait to the edge of the continental shelf. The southern part of the Gulf is shallow because of sediment deposition from the St. Lawrence system, and in several places these sediments have emerged to form islands.

The kinds of plant communities found on the Gulf islands are largely determined by the quality of soil that has derived from the sedimentary bedrock, and by the rigors of the local climate. The mammalian fauna native to these islands is often far less varied than that of the adjacent mainland, because of the risks colonizing individuals must run in order to reach the islands. In this article, I will outline the main biological and physical characteristics of the Gulf's "other islands": Anticosti, Bonaventure, the Magdalens, and the North Shore islands

### The Magdalens

The Magdalens are the closest Gulf islands to Prince Edward Island and are perhaps the best known to Islanders. Situated near the geographic center of the Gulf, they can be seen from the highlands of Cape Breton and on a clear day a traveller aboard the Souris-"Grindstone" ferry can see both Prince Edward Island and the Magdalens. The Magdalen chain stretches some 80 km but its total land area is very small. The sets of rounded hills which constitute the inhabited part of the archipelago are separated by long parallel sandspits which enclose large shallow lagoons. Most of the Magdalen uplands are underlain by red sandstone bedrock which gives rise to the red soil and cliffs familiar to Islanders. Grey limestone, gypsum and igneous formations are also present.

Unlike Prince Edward Island, the Magdalens were not linked to the mainland by a land bridge after the retreat of the last glacier. As a result their mammalian fauna is the most impoverished of any island in the Gulf. Only the deer mouse is known with certainty to be native to the islands. In 1534 Jacques Cartier recorded "bears and foxes" on the Magdalens but these mammals may not have been permanent residents as subsequent explorers failed to mention their presence. Red foxes, of unknown origin, now inhabit the islands, and prey on the native deer mice as well as on meadow voles, which may have hitchhiked to the islands on shipments of hay.

Given their location, it is not surprising that the Magdalens are richer in marine than terrestrial fauna. At one time walrus in large numbers inhabited the islands' shores and shallows but as on Prince Edward Island, the herds were wiped out by white hunters. Grey and harbour seals are now common, and every spring the drifting ice brings in thousands of harp seals to their pupping grounds in the vicinity of the islands.

Since the Magdalen Islands have high cliffs inaccessible to land predators, and are surrounded by rich fishing grounds, the area is ideal for seabirds. The most spectacular of these are the Bird Rock gannets, which nest so thickly on the vertical sides of that small islet that it appears white from a distance. The Bird Rock Gannetry was once the largest in the world, but its numbers have been severely reduced by human disturbance and by loss of habitat due to erosion of the soft sandstone.