

If mixed flocks of Blackbirds seen together at places other than roosts are held together by any other bond than a mutual food supply, it is not known to the author. Bronzed Grackles and European Starlings are prominent on the ground of newly harvested hayfields feeding on insects that have fallen off the hay. Brown-headed Cowbirds associate with Starlings in the vicinity of cattle. Blackbird flocks also feed on plant seed. They are fond of grain, some of which is waste, but sometimes it represents damage. The Rusty Blackbird is sometimes seen with other Blackbirds in spring. The only record for fall the author has of it mixing with other birds is a lone bird seen with a flock of 190 Cowbirds at Marie on October 9, 1966. The Cowbird is one of the few birds that appear to associate well with burned-over fields. The author has no flocking records for the Bobolink.

Blackbird flocks which could have been migrants were Red-winged Blackbirds seen on October 7, 1950 (60) and October 15, 1966 (150), both in Mount Stewart Marsh. A flock of 100+ Cowbirds on April 9, 1967 at Souris was seen with some Grackles and Starlings. Some of the other flocks mentioned in this article could have been migrants.

With the exception of those seen about roosts, the European Starling can be met with in flocks of over 50 birds in any season but the nesting season (May-June). Flocks peak in spring in March and April, and again in fall in September and October. Flocks seen in winter are usually congregated about a food source (e.g., January 24, 1964, a flock of 1,500+ at Charlottetown dump).

Bruce C. Pigot  
Mount Stewart  
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A CHALLENGE

There are no groups on Prince Edward Island, other than Natural historians, which fill the niche of recording increases, declines or status of our furred and feathered co-inhabitants.

Hence, a challenge to all you naturalists, rookies and old timers alike:

The geese have returned, snow is melting and the clamor of spring has begun. Get out where the action is, become exposed to the variety of enjoyable experiences that natural areas of Prince Edward Island offer you and share your interesting observations with others, either by writing them down yourself or by telling someone who will.

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