

- Mar. 31 - ECOPEI annual meeting featuring Gary Schneider with an illustrated presentation on the first year at MacPhail Woodlot. Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. at Sound Ventures, 310 Queen Street, Charlottetown
- Mar. 31 - Nest Box Construction Workshop. Contact Kate at 566-9150 for info.
- Apr. 6 - Dr. Donna Giberson will be The Society's meeting speaker and will be offering a presentation on insects. The meeting commences at 7:30 p.m.
- April 11 - National Wildlife Week
- Apr. 16 - The Island Nature Trust will hold its 9th Annual Fund Raising Dinner. Tickets are \$30. Contact Kate MacQuarrie at 566-9150 for information.
- May 2 to 8 - This is National Forestry Week with the theme of Our Common Ground. Contact Ken Mayhew at 368-4707 for information on programs.
- May 4 - The last Society meeting before the summer break will feature the Society's slide contest. The deadline for slide submissions will be about a month before the contest.
- May 29 - Birders are encouraged to head for the fields and dales to participate in the Bain Birdathon. The counts can be made anywhere in the province.
- June 5 - 12 - National Environment Week. Watch your local paper for events.
- June - The Society is considering a field trip to the Magdalens for birding. Anyone who would be interested should contact Dan McAskill. The estimated cost is unknown at this time.
- July 22 - 25 - The North Okanagan Club will host the 1993 Canadian Nature Federation Conference at Vernon, B.C. The theme will be "From Desert Sands to Alpine Slopes". For further information contact the Club Secretary at Box 473, Vernon, B.C. V1T 6M4

MEADOWLARKS - EAST VERSES WEST

by Jim Edsall

Recent evidence suggests that a significant percentage of the meadowlarks found in New Brunswick during winter are, in fact, western meadowlarks.

Separating Eastern and Western Meadowlarks in the field presents some problems. One of the biggest however is the lack of information in the current field guides, all of which state that identification can only be safely made by voice. This may be so in summer when Meadowlarks are hard to approach, but birds visiting feeders in winter provide the opportunity for close examination, at which times the two species can be separated on the basis of plumage differences.

Generally, Westerns are paler birds lacking the bright colors and contrasts of the Eastern. This is a somewhat subjective trait and only of real value when the two species are seen together. However, a noticeably pale bird could tip you off to a possible Western.

The crown stripes and eye line of the Western are brown, finely streaked with black. These stripes are black in the Eastern. The light areas of the Western's face are pale brown, and show little contrast with the headstripes, not like the obvious black and white pattern of the Eastern's face.

The yellow of the Western's throat is quite variable but almost always extends onto the cheek, occasionally to just below the eye and usually to the base of the lower mandible. On the Eastern, the yellow is restricted to the throat and its upper limit is sharply delineated by the malar line. (see diagram.) On the birds that I have studied, the yellow on the Western was duller and more ochreous than the bright yellow of the Eastern.

The field mark most visible at any distance is the tail pattern. On the Western, this consists of several widely separated stripes of relatively even width. In the Eastern, these markings are diamond shaped and continue evenly along the quill, creating one large dark marking.

Variability exists in all of these markings but a bird exhibiting all of the above mentioned characteristics can be safely identified as a Western