

## GANNETS AND GULLS DIE

During the 1991 International Piping Plover Census, counters on the Cascumpec Sandhills and Conway Sandhills found a relatively large number of dead adult Northern Gannets, Herring Gulls, Greater Black-backed Gulls, and a few cormorants. The Society contacted the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Fish and Wildlife Division and a small number of dead birds which were still relatively intact were autopsied by Dr. Pierre Yves Daoust of the Atlantic Veterinary College. The following report was subsequently placed in the Atlantic Society of Fish and Wildlife Biologists Newsletter Volume 8 #1, March 1992.

"During the summer of 1991, more than 100 northern gannets (*Sulsa bassana*) were found dead or in very weak condition in and around the Northumberland Strait. Most deaths were reported during June, but one bird was found in late August. The cause of these deaths (investigated by Dan Busby, CWS Sackville, N.B. and Pierre-Yves Daoust, AVC, P.E.I.) could not be determined. Only five relatively well preserved birds were available for laboratory examination. No significant gross or microscopic lesion was seen in these birds. Emaciation was not considered to be the primary problem. Levels of DDE and PCBs in livers of two of four birds were relatively high, although this may have resulted from redistribution of these contaminants following depletion of the birds fat reserves. Involvement of a biotoxin produced by algal blooms was suspected, but limited tests could not confirm this. Interestingly, at approximately the same time, about 400 gannets were also found dead or very weak along the coast of North Carolina. In this case as well, extensive laboratory examination failed to reveal the cause of the problem."

## TERN COLOUR BANDING ALERT

Common Terns on Lake Champlain have been colour marked in a study of their breeding ecology and post-breeding dispersal. In addition to a Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) band and 3 colour bands, each adult is marked with a yellow dye on the breast, belly, undertail, underwings, and/or rump. Juveniles are marked with a FWS band and a single yellow colour band. Observers are asked to note specifically which areas of plumage are marked, colour band combinations, date and location of sighting, and as much other information as possible. Please report to Chris Rimmer, Vermont Institute of Natural Science, Woodstock, VT 05091 and the Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD 20708.

## ANIMAL AND PLANT SIGHTINGS

Good flight of June beetles in Donagh this year. Fireflies started in Donagh on June 15; very large numbers present on June 19th in Donagh. (JDM)

Jack-in-the-Pulpit in flower on the Morell River in early June (BH). Lilac, elderberry, and pin cherry all in flower on June 5. Large amounts of red maple seed in some stands in Brackley Beach on June 19. Lupins starting into seed in some areas on July 9 (JDM).

Very large run of grilse (Atlantic Salmon who have spent one year at sea) 600+ on the Morell River this year (BH).

Many more sightings of red fox in Point Prim area this winter than in 1990 and 1991. Coyote sightings common in Mt. Buchanan area (TM). Red Fox seen in Summerside on April 2 and skunk reported in Montague on March 30 (N&SS). Bats at Brooklyn Pond, MacLeans Pond, and Doyles Pond in late June and July (BB, JDM).