

If you wish to become a 1975 contributor, contact Margaret Mallet, 53 Fitzroy Street, Charlottetown. She will supply you with cards and information on how to record the data. If you are in the habit of finding nests, your contributions would be much appreciated.

- A Tern Tale -

On July 8, 1974, a friend and I walked across the Hillsborough Bridge to count the Common Terns nesting on the old bridge piers. On our return, we watched a little incident unfold:

One of the first-hatched baby terns has made probably its first flight to the causeway; this being the usual procedure. It was sitting on the bank, down at the edge of the water.

One of its parents flew by carrying a small fish for the baby tern. Because of the two people standing watching on the sidewalk up on the bridge, the parent bird would not deliver the fish. After many flights past and several returns to home pier and much tern talk, Parent Tern at last got the message across. Baby Tern finally flew about 50 feet farther along the embankment. Parent Tern instantly flew to Baby Tern and delivered the fish.

The show was over. We walked away leaving Baby Tern sitting there fortified for future flights.

- Margaret Mallet
Charlottetown

Black-Capped Chickadee

The Chickadees are the most common birds in our winter woods. You no sooner enter the snow-draped thicket than out bobs a tiny black head to greet you with a merry pee-dee, and you see the little songsters flitting everywhere in the frozen boughs, perfectly at home as they pounce on the dormant insects that infest the foliage. Their activity is ceaseless. Flitting, twirling like acrobats on the naked sprays, heels up, head up, it makes no difference. Calling from the loftiest tree top, whispering from the low thicket, they are the very spirits of the winter wood-lands, without which these would often be destitute of animate life.

The Black-capped Chickadee is distinguished by his clear-ashy coat, and whitish vest, and conspicuous black crown and throat. Female the same color. The nest is built in a hole in a stump, which the little architect excavates for himself. It is well lined with grass and wool, and contains eight or ten very small whitish eggs. The Chickadee is one of the boldest of birds. He usually builds in retired woods, but will approach dwellings if it suits him. He meets the wood-man in his native home without fear and as a friend; and among his fellows is one of the deadliest of combatants. Mr. H. D. Minot, of New England, tells us that the Chickadee sleeps with his head tucked under his wing.

- Francis Bain, 1891
"Birds of Prince Edward Island"

Ed. Note: The above article on the Chickadee, written in 1891, is as pertinent today as when it was written. We plan to publish further literature written by early P.E.I. natural historians. Recognition of their achievements is long overdue!

Astronomical Calendar - Spring 1975

March through late July Venus, the second planet from the Sun, is about the same size as the third planet, Earth. Venus is named after the goddess of love; however, space probes have discovered that its surface is more like hell, with almost red-hot temperatures, winds, thick clouds, and a crushing poisonous atmosphere. Venus now appears as a very bright, star-like object in the western sky after sunset.