

New Brunswick who were both on the Island for the East Point Christmas Bird Count. They both concluded that the bird was indeed a Brewer's and not a Rusty Blackbird due to features already mentioned above. To get more opinions on the bird Vernon showed the video to experienced birders on Martha's Vineyard and Brian sent the still images to well known birders in the Maritimes. Final confirmation came when the video was sent to Peter Burke and the videographs to Alvaro Jaramillo who are the authors of New World Blackbirds: The Icterids. Between them, they agreed the blackbird was a Brewer's also. Alvaro in his May 6, 2003 E-mail mentioned the pretty solidly black gloss on the back, wings and body, a pretty strong iridescence, and a change in strength of the iridescence and colour between the head and the rest of the body was consistent with an October Brewer's rather than a Rusty. The slight amount of greyish tipping on the face and crown suggested that the bird was a male in its first year. Thus it was concluded that this sighting was indeed Prince Edward Island's first fully documented record of the occurrence of Brewer's Blackbird.

PLANTWATCH PEI

adapted from BBEMA's Newsletter

Have you ever kept a record of plant flowering times? If so, or if you are interested in starting, then the Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association would like to hear from you. Plantwatch PEI is part of a national volunteer monitoring program which tracks the flowering periods of certain key "indicator plant species" including red maple, wild strawberry or Labrador tea. The seasonal information gained from Plantwatch has many practical uses serving as an indicator of long term changes in climate conditions. BBEMA can supply a Plantwatch booklet and other information to assist you. To participate, please contact the BBEMA office at 902-886-3288.



Illustration: Red maple flowers, seeds, & leaves

NEAR VICTORIA PARK:

by Dave G. Stewart

This afternoon I heard a bird in distress noise in my backyard, and found a sharpie dispatching a European Starling. A picture was taken through windows with the digital zoom on my camera. A short time later I heard more noise, and found the sharpie on his back under a crow, and surrounded by more crows. I ran to get my camera, but when I returned no birds were to be seen.

Yesterday, we put some food out for the crows in the small woods back of the house. While watching through the binoculars, on crow walked over to another, and booted it with a foot, nearly knocking it over!

We live near Victoria Park, and sometimes have crows in great number spending the night in trees around the house, rather than joining the rest in the Park. I haven't figured what particular weather conditions initiate this.

BALD EAGLES DISPLAY:

by Dan Kennedy

I went to Earnscliffe in the late afternoon on February 12th. Things were very quiet, lots of Horned Larks. I saw about a dozen ravens on the ground near some woods and, when I stopped, I saw that just behind them were two Bald Eagles feeding on something. The ravens were obviously waiting their turn.

I've seen eagles feeding in the same general area on over occasions so I suspect someone was dumping some dead stock. The two eagles (one fully mature the other more juvenile) took off and flew in very close formation for as long as I watched. They were probably never more than ten or 15 feet apart. They performed some nice wheeling, soaring, and other aerial displays. I've seen pairs do much more spectacular displays but this was still neat to see.

The reason that I was out driving around was because a neighbour of mine had told me that he saw a pair of Short-eared Owls, in late December, hunting in the field one over from my place here in Vernon River. It never