

# Too much on birds

It's so nice to get mail. R.B. MacLaren, long-time Natural History Society member from Charlottetown, sent the following letter:

"I'm often tempted to write but rarely do. However, my feelings must be expressed at this time. Not long ago the newsletter indicated that too much attention was given to birds. I should have written at that time because I do feel that birds occupy too much space in the newsletter. I'm not against birds, far from it, but it seems to me that we should have more about mammals and plants. Each of us has his favorite subject, mine happens to be plants, but I should like to know more about our mammals, especially the smaller ones, mice, voles, moles etc.

May I go back to the birds? In the last newsletter there was one mention of double-crested cormorants at Point Prim. Have none of our bird-watchers crossed the Hillsborough Bridge lately? A few years ago when one crossed the bridge it was natural to see two or three dozen cormorants. I'm unable to even estimate the number one sees today. On the other hand one sees fewer terns. Have the cormorants displaced the terns?

I should like to relate a story told me by my sister, Mrs. Alice Poole of Lower Montague. Mrs. Poole lives in sight of what I would call the inner part of Georgetown Harbour. Late in August she, her son and a guest saw a flock of cormorants, up to maybe 400, trap a school of fish. None of the party was able to identify the fish but they were probably smelts with a few tinkers along. One thing for sure they were not sticklebacks! The cormorants fed for at least 3/4 of an hour and, when they left, many of the birds were so full they could not get airborne. There is no question in my mind that these birds need to be controlled.

Early in the letter I mentioned that plants are high on my list of natural subjects. Early this summer I was fortunate enough to find a species not previously reported in P.E.I. The name is Cardamine flexuosis. It is a real thrill to locate a species not previously known in the province.

Sincerely,  
R.B. MacLaren

I would like to thank Bruce for taking the time and an interest in the Island Naturalist. The newsletter has a decided bias towards birds not because of this or past editors' preferences but because most of the articles submitted deal with birds, and because the printing of Bird Reports often takes up over one quarter of the newsletter.

For this issue I would like to devote the six or seven pages that the Bird Reports would have taken up to other articles and press releases, some local and some national. The miscellaneous reports are short and are quite interesting this issue and so they will be included. Please continue to send in your bird sightings. They will be invaluable to future revisions of the field check list (all are saved) and unique sightings will be published.

And once again I'd like to ask readers to write in and suggest articles or send in their own. Everyone has some special interest, perhaps a favourite plant or knowledge of the natural history of an area. The newsletter is a good place to share these things. I hope you enjoy it.

Gary Schneider

(P.S. - Our house is taking shape and we have a new mailing address and phone number if you have something for the newsletter - RR#6, Cardigan, COA 1G0 838-2678).