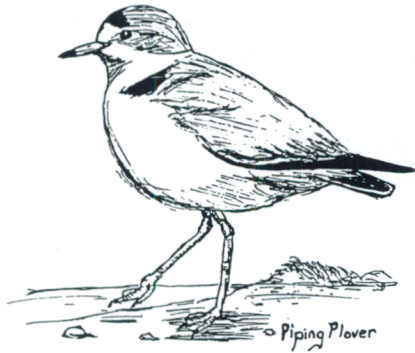


a beach walk and pot luck hosted by Neil and Sally Bennett at their Cousin's Pond cottage on May 12th. There Jackie Waddell and Neil led a discussion on the guardianship program and Neil led a walk on the beach so that new guardians could see the birds in their habitat.



The mini-census, conducted this year at the request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was discussed by Dan McAskill. A healthy debate was held on whether the census should be held on the recommended dates of June 4th to 12th or earlier because of the presence of gaspareau fishers on certain beaches and the need to have the nest locations identified to help the Piping Plover recovery effort.

During the June 4th to 16th period, Gerald MacDonald, Madelaine Venart, Robert King, Rosemary Curley, Ross Bernard, Meike Keuncke, Neil and Sally Bennett, Ben and Gilbert Hoteling, Rachel Gautreau, Dale Small, Darren Wile, and I conducted censuses on all the beaches but two outside the P.E.I. National Park known to have been occupied during the Past decade. Parks and People staff (Beth Grant, Linda Thomas, Paul Ayles, and Susan Shaw) conducted the censuses in the Park itself as part of the P.E.I. National Park's Piping Plover monitoring program. The Park's population was down dramatically with 14 pairs nesting early in the year, the lowest number since 1980 when monitoring started. This number dropped to 13 the week before the census but, by the census week, it had returned to 14. This decrease was feared as the number of fledglings (birds capable of flying) last year was very low (0.6 fledglings per nest) because of five storms and/or severely high tides. Outside the Park, Piping Plover behaviour was erratic with bird concentration increased in western Prince Edward Island and reduced in the eastern region.

In total, the numbers were down from the 110 adults, 51 pairs and 8 single birds in the 1991 census to the 60\* adults, 26 pairs, and 8 singles this year (\* the sites not done had 2 pairs in 1991).

## REDPOLL RAININGS

by Evelyn Meader

Some winters we have been blessed with soaring flocks of 30 to 90 synchronized-flying Snow Buntings. This year we have had only occasional bebies of dance-chorus buntings. The winter treat in 1993 and '94 has been remarkable flocks of redpolls. Unlike their Arctic colleagues, who give a swirl and soar in unison display before or after feeding, the redpolls arrive in a loose cloudlike gathering and sprinkle into our feeder tree one by one. I think of their arrival as an avian shower, an uncommon raining of Common Redpolls. When startled they retreat in a ragged bunching to nearby branches.