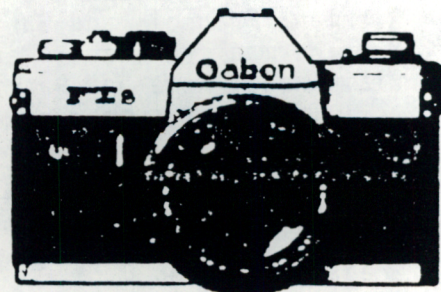


One final nature item to mention, do to the mystery of why and wherefor. The same friends who accompanied me to watch the seal's return to the sea, are from Halifax, N.S., and on a trip from that province, came via the Wood Islands ferry. They were casually taking a stroll on deck when N. looked down and saw a large butterfly lying right where they and the others were coming and going. By means of using his large handkerchief, E., managed a careful "pick up". They have it mounted in a simple cellophane-covered box on the wall of their cottage. The insect is a beauty, perhaps measuring some 5 to 6 inches in width. One muses on where it came from, how it happened to be on the deck of a small ferry boat: possibly as a stow-away in a crate of bananas!

NATURE SLIDES REQUIRED

The Natural History Society's slide contest will be held at the May 1st meeting. Members are encouraged to submit up to 10 slides for judging to Mr. Wendell MacKay at either the March or April meetings or by making arrangements with him at 886-2495. It is important that the owners name be placed only on the outside of the slide box. If the slides themselves are labelled the name should be covered. The slides will be returned after the awards are presented on May 1st. Good luck to all our great photographers.



THE BIRDS OF CHRISTMAS

by Dan McAskill

Phone calls in the wee hours of the morning again preceded the Natural History Society's National Park Christmas Bird Count on December 17th. Fortunately, the storm held off until mid-afternoon across most of the zone and counters had a fairly good day. The Hillsborough count and the fun count in Montague went ahead as scheduled on the 26th and 6th respectively.

What was seen that was strange or at least unusual? In the National Park Count it was the 3 Common Eider, a Northern Goshawk, a Red-tailed Hawk, a Merlin, 2 Northern Shrike, 5 Pine Grosbeaks, 2 Common Grackle, and 22 Common Redpoll. The Hillsborough Count featured a Great Blue Heron, a Northern Goshawk, 4 Sharp-shinned Hawks (1 with a fresh starling kill), an adult Bald Eagle, a Common Snipe, a Short-eared Owl, 21 Bohemian waxwings, 2 Savannah Sparrows, 22 American Tree Sparrows, a Chipping Sparrow, a Swamp Sparrow, and a Song Sparrow. In the Montague circle, 2 Bald Eagles, 38 Mourning Dove, 3 Belted Kingfisher, a Northern Flicker, 6 Pine Grosbeak, 139 American Goldfinch, a Fox Sparrow, and a Song Sparrow were the highlights.

A pot luck supper followed the second count at Dan McAskill's in Donagh. Those in attendance were having such a good time talking and eating that it took some arm twisting to get everyone into the living room to get the count lists together. When all the records were tallied, the National Park Count ended up with 38 species and the Hillsborough Count ended up with 45 species on the count day and an additional 2 in the count period. Many thanks to all the great cooks who contributed to the feast!