

ever before. It is little wonder that the Field Checklist of Birds for P.E.I. (5th edition, 1991) already requires updating in several areas. One recommended new entry to the list is that of Townsend's Solitaire under "Thrushes and Bluebirds." Two 1991 winter records, almost a year apart, are considered here.

The first record is of a bird seen for a total of seven minutes on February 27 and 28 at China Point. The observer, John Hayden, noted the bird's size (perhaps smaller than a Red-winged Blackbird); its robin-like head with a somewhat finer bill; tan wing patches, and white sides on the tail. He provided a description to Dan McAskill identifying it as a Townsend's Solitaire, and noted differences from other birds. He indicated it to be smoother in appearance than a mockingbird and smaller with more rounded wings and tail feathers than on a mourning dove. The solitaire was perched on both days in open farmland, first on a dead tree, then on a fencepost. On the second observation day, Mr. Hayden tried to check for the white eye ring of a Townsend's Solitaire, but was unable to see this feature from a distance of 20 meters.

The second siting was recorded December 24, 1991. The fortunate viewer, Joyce MacLeod of Greenfield Avenue, Charlottetown glanced at her congregation of feeding birds and spotted an oddball. A brownish robin-like bird with a white eye ring was behaving much like a robin in the snow laden yew bush adjacent to her house. Joyce quickly grabbed her Peterson Field Guide to the Birds (4th edition) and flipped to the thrushes. Pictured on the first page of the thrush section is the Townsend's Solitaire, and sitting in the yew bush was the model for the picture. Joyce easily matched the soft grayish brown body, the patchy light areas on the wings, the eye ring and the white tail feathers of the bird and picture.

The solitaire was alone (surprised?) and stayed only about two minutes. Having made a good impression in its one short visit, it has not exposed itself since.

Townsend's Solitaires are periodically recorded in the Maritimes well away from their normal western range, and one might expect a solitaire to turn up on Prince Edward Island sooner or later. The first record by John Hayden is perhaps less conclusive than the second in that the white-eye ring, a major field mark was not discernible. Taken together, the two records provide good evidence that Townsend's Solitaires really do visit P.E.I. The next challenge will be to find a group of solitaires.

NEWS FROM ABOUT

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology released a warning against the use of glycerin, an alcohol-like bird bath antifreeze. They noted that it takes a 30% solution to lower the freezing point to 15 degrees Fahrenheit and that this concentration will cause elevated blood sugar levels and possibly the death of birds ingesting it in large quantities. At levels required to prevent water from freezing during our winters, it causes feathers to mat. Matted feathers are poor insulators. The experts recommended electric immersion style heaters. (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology release)

The men who shot and killed one of only 33 breeding female Whooping Cranes remaining in the wild was fined \$10,000 and sentenced to a 60 day jail term, 200 hours of community service, and 5 years probation. His accomplice received a fine of \$2,000, a jail term of 20 days, 200 hours of community service, and 3 years probation. In addition, they were ordered to pay \$8,100 in civil damages. (adapted from Birder's World, Feb. 1992)

