

VOTE FOR A PROVINCIAL BIRD

The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island is interested in designating a bird as a provincial emblem. Is it a bird-brain idea? Not to anyone who loves Prince Edward Island and loves birds.

Members of the Society decided to do something to tell the world that they fit into both categories. First of all, they got together and argued a lot about which bird would be best but there were so many birds to pick from they decided it could only be chosen through an official vote. In that way black eyes were avoided.

To make a long story short, many birds were presented as the best choice; we've selected the top eight vote-getters and are presenting them to the general public so that when a choice is finally made it will truly be a "Provincial" emblem, selected by Islanders. You may not agree that any of the birds we suggest is the best choice. We've left room for a write-in candidate, so feel free.

When the votes are counted and the popular choice is apparent we hope to have the ??? legislated as the official avian emblem of Prince Edward Island.

A short write-up follows on each of the candidate birds. Below you will find a ballot with the choices listed. Ballots, or a reasonable facsimile should be returned before May 30 to:

Rosemary Curley
183 North River Road
Charlottetown, P. E. I. C1A 3L2

Belted Kingfisher

The Belted Kingfisher breeds Canada wide and is a common summer resident of P. E. I.'s ponds and streams.

It nests in bank burrows 3 to 7 feet in length, usually laying 6 to 7 eggs. The young are fed a variety of fish (usually of no commercial value) which the adult secures by diving head first into the water.

The loud harsh rattle of the Kingfisher often betrays its position on a limb overhanging a stream. Though it is somewhat similar in appearance to a Blue Jay, the large head and bill make the Kingfisher unique.

The Kingfisher winters south to Panama and the West Indies but occasional birds rough it out on P. E. I.

Black Duck

The Black Duck replaces the Mallard in Eastern Canada and breeds throughout Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces.

On P. E. I. it is a common sight even in roadside ponds and makes up 50 percent of our breeding waterfowl. Broods of ducklings averaging 7 (broods as large as 17 have been recorded), hatch throughout May, June and July and are mature by mid-September.

The Black Duck is the subject of intense study by waterfowl biologists because of its slowly declining numbers and its value as a game bird.

It commonly winters along Eastern United States but 2000-3000 birds are recorded annually in winter along the bays and open inland waters of P. E. I.