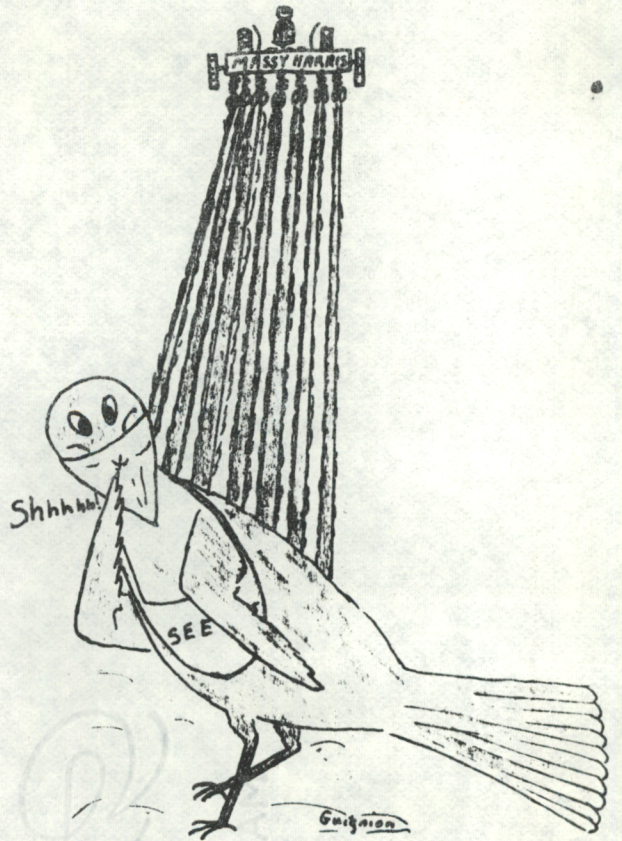


The Grackle found an ideal habitat on Prince Edward Island. It first nested at Mount Stewart about the years 1910-1912 on the land now occupied by the Roman Catholic Church property. This bird was instrumental in causing a revolution in farming practice on P.E.I. Before the advent of the Bronzed Grackle, grain was sown with a broadcast seeder which scattered the seed on top of the ground. A later operation with flat harrows covered the seed. When farmers used this method, the seed was vulnerable to the depredations of the Grackles who would ruin a field in short order. Some farmers tried to cover in the seed with wheel harrows, but it did not work well. They then had to switch to the drill seeder which buried the seed out of reach. Grackles became so numerous about Mount Stewart that the author's grandfather had to buy a drill seeder about 1920.



Grackles are very prominent following the farmer as he tills the soil, picking up worms and grubs to feed to their young. The seeds, on the other hand, are eaten by adults, so it is apparent that the crop damage is due to their appetite and not to that of their young.

#### EUROPEAN STARLING

This is an abundant resident and an abundant breeder. The late J. Frank Sterns told me by letter, dated April 22, 1959, that the Starlings came in with a rush. He first saw them in a flock of about 20 in February, 1931, and in a couple of years, they were here in hundreds all over the country.

Unlike the other blackbirds which are resident for only the warmer part of the year, the Starling is a permanent resident. In cold weather, it shelters in buildings and cavities and also can be seen warming itself in heat escaping from the tops of chimneys of buildings. It will also warm one foot, holding it up to its body while hopping about on the other.

Just how many migrate south is a good question. Probably our summer population is replaced by a sparser more northerly one in winter. It is also thought that birds heard in spring mimicking birds' songs, some not native to the Island in winter, have migrated north from warmer climates.

