

A RECORD NUMBER OF SPECIES

BY ROSEMARY CURLEY

A record number of 45 species was recorded on the December 21, 1985 Prince Edward Island Bird Count. Highlighting the line-up was a short-eared owl sighted at 12:45 p.m. by Paul and Elsebeth Olshefsky on the Stanhope Road about a mile west of the Dalvay entrance to the park. This is the first record of this species on any P.E.I. count. High Numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, Gray Partridge, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Lapland Longspurs and White-winged Crossbills were also recorded, while sightings of water birds such as Canada Geese were low, due to a shortage of open water. The closure of the sanitary landfill in East Royalty seems to have affected the numbers of gulls in the area, and very low numbers were recorded.

Temperatures were cool (-19 to -8 o C), but the stillness of the day facilitated identification through both sight and sound. Twenty observers recorded 45 species and 3839 individual birds. The breakdown is as follows:

Great Blue Heron - 1	
Canada Goose - 4	
American Black Duck - 178	
Oldsquaw - 12	
Surf Scoter - 1	
White-winged Scoter - 1	
Common Goldeneye - 166	
Barrow's Goldeneye - 50	
Common Merganser - 69	
Red-breasted Merganser - 1	
Northern Goshawk - 1	
Red-tailed Hawk - 2	
Rough-legged Hawk - 1	
Gray Partridge - 96	
Ruffed Grouse - 4	
Herring Gull - 28	
Great-black Backed Gull - 43	
Rock Dove - 118	
Mourning Dove - 10	
Short-eared Owl - 1	
Belted Kingfisher - 1	
Downy Woodpecker - 5	
Hairy Woodpekcker - 5	
Horned Lark - 58	
Blue Jay - 187	
American Crow - 509	
	Common raven - 59
	Black-capped chickadee - 95
	Boreal Chickadee - 5
	Red-breasted nuthatch - 15
	Golden-crowned kinglet - 7
	Bohemian waxwing - 60
	European starling - 630
	Song sparrow - 2
	White-throated sparrow - 1
	Northern junco - 18
	Lapland longspur - 135
	Snow bunting - 477
	Brown-headed cowbird - 1
	Pine grosbeak - 9
	Purple finch - 11
	White-winged crossbill - 30
	American goldfinch - 1
	Evening grosbeak - 79
	House sparrow - 662

Following the count, many of the enthusiastic birders repaired to the Symmes household in Bonshaw where food and prizes were distributed. The prizes were just one feature of the National Parks Centennial Celebration, and a welcome addition to the count, which has been held in the park and surrounding areas since 1972. P.E.I. National Park Operations Manager, Robert MacNeill, was on hand to reward the following crews for their diligence: