

Early in October I turned the survey of the airport over to local birder Roberta Palmer because it was becoming too time consuming to cover my four airports three times a month from my home on Grand Manan Island, N.B. Roberta has provided me with the results of her coverages up until the end of 1992, and I have included them in a table with this account which may give the reader an idea of what was found during those surveys. Probably the highlight was the shorebirds that used the airport for both foraging and nesting prior to migration.

Good numbers of Lesser Golden Plover could be found throughout September and October, a real treat for both myself and Roberta. For myself because I had never seen such numbers before, and for her because she had never seen them at all. I would venture that this is probably the best location on the Island to see this species on an annual basis. The best chance of seeing them from outside the airport is to go to that area of fence closest to the main road near the old terminal building and peer through with binoculars.



The best sighting of all was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper found on September 9th, and again on September 24th, both in exactly the same spot. It was undoubtedly the same bird, and although I conducted a survey in between those dates, it was not seen then. This is probably the third record ever for Prince Edward Island.

A fair number of Horned Larks were found early on, leading me to believe they had nested on the airport proper. Judging by the mix between adults and juveniles I would estimate that between three and four pairs had nested during the summer.

Other interesting observations included a brood of six Gray Partridge almost full grown on October 5th, indicating a hatching date in late August or early September. This was obviously a second or third attempt, perhaps due to the presence of a Red Fox on the airport property.

A young Barn Swallow, just out of the nest, was found on September 9th sitting on a fence and looking rather forlorn without its parents. They had apparently migrated leaving it to fend for itself, which it appeared to be doing on September 24th, when I saw it near the site of the first encounter.

Adjacent to one runway is a large area of cattail permanently flooded with water, and it was here that Blue- and Green-winged Teal were found. Investigations during the breeding season would undoubtedly turn up other marsh birds such as Sora and perhaps Virginia Rail.

So far, the most obvious danger to aircraft using the Charlottetown Airport are the large number of gulls, especially Ring-billed Gulls, that feed and loaf along the runways. Although I did not see more than 100, I was told that on some occasions more than 300 were present. Snow Buntings are also a threat during the winter when bare areas along the runway are kept open for plowing. Surprisingly, one pilot reported hitting a fox in mid-August!