

white ash, black walnut, and some other species suggests that factors other than genetics are probable causes. Whatever the cause, we the viewers can enjoy the spectacle in the forest by closely viewing the bark for the telltale "eyes".

[adapted from Research Paper 117: *Field Identification of Birdseye in Sugar Maple* by D.C. Bragg and D.D. Stokke of the USDA North Central Forest Experiment Station].

THE BAIN BIRDA????:

Life in the field of birding and environmental conservation took another one of the "corporate induced" twists recently. While researching the *News from About* column for issue 140 of the *Island Naturalist*, I noticed an article in the Long Point Bird Observatory Annual Report. LPBO applied for and, in 1994, received legal trademark to the term "Birdathon".

The LPBO article indicated that they were the first group to use the term in Canada with the development of the Baillie BIRDATHON in 1976. The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island has been conducting its Bain Birdathon since May, 1978. The quandary that we are now faced with is potentially renaming our event! Suggestions are welcome, contact the editor (see inner cover).

A DARK AND STORMY DAY:

by Sean Curley

A dark and stormy day
Late one day in May.
Lightning crashed
As trees thrashed.
Claps of thunder, clouds of gray
All came in late that day.
Thunder and lightning all gave us a fright
Then another bolt of lightning cut off the power light.
But we weren't scared when the wind blew
Cause we are safe when we're with you.

ARGYLE SHORE FIRSTS:

by Barbara Curley

Argyle Shore, 8:45 a.m., March 26, 1996

The telltale "Whrrra Whrrr" or "Pzst Pzst" song alerted me that there were waxwings close by. I turned in my chair to look at the apple tree 20' outside my window. It was full of fat grey apples, but these apples had PEI red clay coloured linings on their tails and around their eyes. The brilliant yellow tail tips and wing bars with a little red and white thrown in reminded me of Indian bead work. I had been raking old apples from under the tree the day before and the waxwings were devouring the remains.

In my past experience waxwings have come in small numbers 6-20 and only stayed for a short period. These stayed for at least 13 minutes and I was able to count 75 as they sat plumped up facing into the southeast breeze. A passing truck startled them and sadly they rushed off like a flock of snow buntings wheeling and dipping. However, what a treat on a dull spring day.

9:15. They're back!, although this time they snuck up on me. No warning "Whrrr Whrr" just right to the food and little time to waste perching in the tree. Later: they returned several times that day. At times the ground looked alive with birds. They'd lift and drop if startled "as leaves that before the wind hurricane fly, when they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky" (Night Before Christmas), then return back to their meal.

Either they realized they had an appreciative audience or it was the best meal they'd had in a long time or perhaps they were drunk on the fermented juice of the apples.