

By 5:30 a.m. we are off. At this point I'm thinking "what am I doing here!" At the end of the day I was the one saying, we should have left at 4:30. We, being Roberta Palmer, Ray Cooke, the experience on the team, and myself, the novice. We headed first to Valleyfield, well sort of, there were many stops along the way, at every marsh, bog or bird feeder that looked interesting. We were only mildly discouraged when the woodcock and the Blue Grosbeak failed to appear for us, things would surely improve. Improve they did, Valleyfield itself offered up some warblers, grosbeaks, woodpeckers, a peewee and some others. The List was beginning to grow. It was while we were leaving Valleyfield or trying to, in any case, that I caught the real essence of bird watching. It was only a small event in the day, but it had it all. First the discovery. We were driving down a narrow dirt path, all the windows down listening, when everyone said at once "what was that?". The chase - out of the car, books and glasses in hand following that sound. The car, by the way, is left running in the middle of the road. We found him, high in a tree, in plain view, singing his heart out. The identification - well, we looked at him, we looked at the books and back at the bird, there was much discussion as to the colour, the wings, tail, and every other part of this little guy who never missed a note through our examination. The verdict was Nashville Warbler. It's time for me to admit that, as we walked back to retrieve the car, I'm thinking "how can they be so sure? It just looks like a little greyish yellowish bird to me." Back in the car Ray finds his tape of bird songs and plays the Nashville Warbler. Satisfaction - this is it. Beyond all doubt that is what I heard. Birding in a nutshell. No wonder its becoming such a popular pastime.

VALLEYFIELD ↑



The next stop was Harvey Moore's Wildlife Area. We hoped to find some water birds here but, other than geese, the ponds were vacant. A walk through the trails made the stop worthwhile as we found a number of woodland birds. As we stopped to record our finds at the end of the trail, a Sharp-shinned Hawk sort of just cruised over our heads. Past noon hour, we decide to move on to shorebirds. Being the back seat driver, I

can't accuse Ray of being lost but I'm fairly sure the Riverton Marsh was not on the travel plan. However, it turned out to be one of the most pleasant stops of the day. The road goes straight through the extensive marsh area. We set up the scope and had a leisurely look at some widgeon and snipe. Some of the time we were content just to look at nothing. It was a very peaceful spot. From here on I'm not sure of the order of the stops but we had a look in Mt. Stewart and Savage Harbour. I do remember Blooming Point. A great vantage point enabled us to look out to sea or into the marsh. Ray and Roberta spent a long time discussing a dot on the horizon which appeared to one of them to be a shoveller. There were some sparrows and cormorants at a much closer range which kept me occupied for awhile but, I must admit, the cold wind was getting to me and I didn't much care if it was a shoveller or not. Some time later, it moved, they concurred, and we left.

Another high point in the day was Tracadie Harbour where we were pleased to find the sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers had arrived back. The list was lengthening. I redeemed myself for my decided lack of interest in the shoveller