

distance to the calls on the CD player. We were not so lucky with the Barred Owl calls but were able to entice a Great Horned Owl to hoot in reply after hearing juveniles respond. From this area, we traveled to Cardross and there had a Barred Owl respond. This was much more than we expected the evening before but knew we were in for a tough day as the winds continued to climb. By now, dawn was approaching.

At dawn, we were parked overlooking the Rollo Bay Wildlife Management Area trying to steady our scopes as the vehicle shook in the wind. Thousands of Canada Geese were stretched out across the bay as well as hundreds of ducks. Shortly after dawn, they were joined by still more flights from the northwest. By 8 am, we had enjoyed the beauty of seeing and hearing thousands of geese rising and settling flock by flock in a huge grain field. Alas, despite our diligence, no Snow Goose was found amidst the flocks. We were thrilled to hear the sounds of some 2,000 geese lift en masse from the grainfield to return to the bay and subsequently start dispersing to surrounding potato and grain fields. From the lookout, we moved around through Lower Rollo Bay hoping to locate a Black-headed Gull. While we picked up a good variety puddle ducks and a single Blue Jay we were unable to find the Black-headed Gull reported in this area by Vern Laux a few days earlier. Forest birds were not to be heard or found.

Our route brought us along Sheep Pond Road then northward through Souris West and Souris. The pond in Souris West yielded still more waterfowl and a bird identified by some as a female Harlequin based on the colours, size, shape, diving behaviour, and the presence of a whitish spot in front of and behind the eye. However, consensus was not reached amidst the team. Around this time, Eric discovered shorebirds on top of aquaculture floats and we were able to add Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Semipalmated Sandpiper.



Several stops along Black Pond and then Basin Head finally brought us our first two Yellow-rumped Warblers. Then we arrived at East Point. By now, the winds were gale force and the southern and eastern waters were covered in white caps. As we parked the van, a vast array of Common Eider and about one hundred Northern Gannett were observed feeding in the lee waters close to shore. Scopes left unattended for seconds went tumbling in the wind and we quickly moved into the lee of the gift shop overlooking the bluff.

East Point was certainly the highlight of the birding day. The stop here brought a Lesser Scaup, a female King Eider, Black-legged Kittiwake, three species of scoter, and more over and on the waters. The raptors and forest birds normally seen here were conspicuously absent on this day although one quick look was had by one team member of a raptor disappearing into the canopy. It had the flight, colours, and size of a goshawk but the glimpse was too fleeting to confirm its identity.

From East point we journeyed along the north shore road to North Lake, Campbell's Cove, Priest Pond, Monticello and then St. Peters before returning to Charlottetown where we lost one of our members to other commitments. Known feeders, hot spots, and sheltered forest sites yielded little in the driving rain and wind. By our 4:45 pm arrival in Charlottetown we had seen 62 species. The wind was abating and the sun was finally breaking through the clouds so the remaining team members decided to give the P.E.I. National Park a try. Here we were finally able to add a few shrub and forest species to the list as well as the elusive Wood Duck and Caspian Tern.

By day's end at 7:20 pm, we had traveled 336 km and seen at least 75 species. We enjoyed the comradery of birding friends and had a wonderfully brisk autumn day amidst the many birding hot spot locations of eastern Prince Edward Island. Thus the 2002 Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic field component came to a close. However, the Birding Classic is not just for the birders who participate. It represents a chance for those interested in birding to donate towards conservation of natural areas in Prince Edward Island and an opportunity to register bird observations for future scientific analysis. The friends of conservation were generous and donated \$675 to this year's project, the acquisition of Bird Island in northwestern Malpeque Bay. The Autumn Birding Classic since its inception has raised over \$7,500.

For the birding enthusiasts and future researchers on bird occurrence, the complete species list is provided below.

Common Loon

Red-throated Loon

Red-necked Grebe