

UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS AT PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

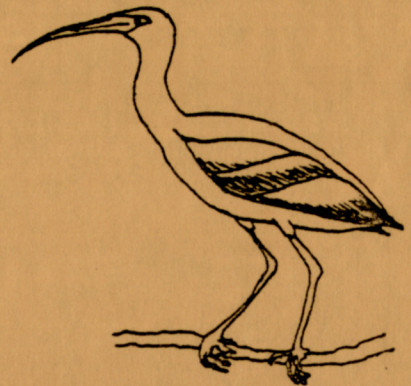
by Judi Allen (Seasonal Interpreter, P.E.I. National Park)

Prince Edward Island National Park with its variety of woodland habitat, numerous sheltered salt marshes and ponds is an excellent area for bird watching, especially during migration. The snowless winter, extra early spring, and August's unruly weather have contributed to some rather unusual bird sightings this year.

- Just outside the Park on March 30th a Rough-legged Hawk was sighted hovering over a farm field.
- During early spring migration a Great Egret was reported May 4 on the Cavendish sandspit.
- A single Chimney Swift displaying its very characteristic flight pattern was observed over Dalvay Pond, May 15.
- June was an exciting month as there were well documented sightings of both a Glossy Ibis (Covehead Pond, June 29) and a Snowy Egret (Tracadie Marsh, June 15).
- A female Scarlet Tanager was seen August 2 darting in and about the apple trees around Dalvay headquarters.

Also of interest: Piping Plover and Great Blue Heron nesting numbers appear stable. Due to the poor winter and consequent low rodent populations the summer Marsh Hawk population in the Park was way down. Ring-necked Pheasants appear to have successfully survived the unfavorable winter as there were more sightings this year than last. An Osprey was observed periodically from early May till September hunting in the Long Pond and Campbell's Pond areas.

Fall shore bird migration is in progress now and should continue well into October. Least Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plovers and Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers and Black-bellied Plovers are among the most commonly observed species.



Glossy Ibis

For those of you interested in the upcoming winter, I predict lots of snow early in the season as the muskrats started building their lodges August 1 this year, approximately three weeks early... so get your cross country skis ready!