

Dr. Rick Cawthorne provided an illustrated lecture on the parasites of wild animals in March; Dr. Pierre-Yves Daoust was the featured speaker on "Stranding of Deep Sea Species on Island Beaches" in April; John DeGrace explained the geology of P.E.I. and its fossils in October; Dr. David Cairns spoke on the challenges of "How To Count Fish" on November; and Lupins were the topic of Dr. Katherine Clough's December presentation.

This was also a very active field trip year with Dan McAskill leading a field trip to Victoria Park, Rosemary Curley leading a canoe trip on Johnson's River marsh on July 11th, and Barb Currie leading a field trip to the The Atlantic Waterfowl Celebration at Sackville, N. B. on August 7th. Seven Society members went on a trip to Grand Manan, N.B. from August 28th to 30th, and Roberta Palmer organized the Society barbeque pot-luck picnic at the P.E.I. National Park's Brackley Shelter on September 13th. Society members also hosted and participated in two Audubon-Leica Christmas Bird Counts and pot-lucks, the Montague Christmas Bird Count, a western bird excursion, an Owl Prowl, and a big bird day.

PARTRIDGES IN A PEAR TREE

by Evelyn Meader

I am writing this on a sunny day after the generous snow dump of December 4th to 6th, 1992. A gentle autumn with plenty of exposed seeds has meant few birds visiting the feeder. All has changed this week-end with many hungry customers patronizing our avian cafeteria.

Best of all, our roaming partridges have returned to scratch industriously under the feeders, to hunker down behind the drifts or to race with outstretched necks in single file across the blanketed lawn toward the safety of the bordering bushes.

Months ago, in late spring, a lone limping partridge regularly paid a call to our pear tree where he pecked for spilled seeds. We sympathized with this physically-challenged bird who didn't seem able to scratch and was always all alone. One day when the grass was cut short I could see why he limped. One foot was completely missing.

We named him Cassidy. As summer flourished, Casss arrived with a pal then, a week later, two pals. They were nervous about approaching the house but Cass's nonchalant neighbourly feeding lured them in and they all enjoyed the seeds spilled from above.

Cass's opportunistic friends continued to visit even after they had, sad to say, dumped him. Sometimes, rarely, he hobbled in alone again. By late summer we had no partridge patrons at all.

Fall brought a family with six skittish, tumbling juveniles and two watchful parents. They stayed close to the border where they could melt into the cover in a wink. We observed with eagle eyes but Uncle Cass did not come back.

One evening as Rick drove down the lane, what looked like a shapeless lump of sacking in the headlights, broke into frightened, scattered, individual partridges. Mid-lane is not a safe nap spot, guys and gals. We recommend that you bed down under the pear tree.

With todays appearance of the flightys-in-the-night, we are glad the birds reunited and have a warm covey for wintry snoozes. we are glad for the

