

# A DAY FOR THE BIRDS

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Bird Notes - June 3, 1983 by Peter Feldstein, South Melville

Today was a marvellous birding day. The habitual late-May overcast lifted for the dawn, and the sun shone. Undoubtedly the birds were aware of the difference. At 6:45 A.M. near the Brackley entrance to the National Park it was like one of those caricatures of a city, where the buildings all have large signs on them telling what they are and smiling, and oversized people walk down the streets. Birds were leaping out of the trees, almost shouting, "Here I am! Don't forget to count me!" A ruffed grouse strutted across the road proclaiming, "I am a ruffed grouse; Bonasa umbellus. I can be identified by the complete terminal black band on my finely barred tail. Compare me with the picture in your Golden Guide on page 85. Have a nice day."

Such uncanny abundance would be enough to confound anyone's correct birding sensibilities. Birds are not supposed to sit on exposed limbs engaging in staring contests with birdwatchers. By rights, a bird should have to be chased. It should sing from a dense thicket; when it comes into view after ten minutes of maneuvering it should clam up and scam. That is the normal way, the natural order, with these siren scoundrels. It is as a mathematician once described certain abstruse kinds of numbers. "They're out there," he said, "but they're laughing at you."

One should thus be thankful for days like today. Those who attended the "Birds and Breakfast" and subsequent Birdathon on May 28 had only their raincoats and boots (and breakfast) to be thankful for. As one of that stout company, I vowed to return when the weather boded better birding. Today then was my own "Mini-Birdathon", with results as follows:

Warblers: Mourning, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, Black and White, Blackpoll, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Palm, Tennessee, Magnolia, Canada, Bay-breasted, Wilson's, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat.  
Flycatchers: Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood Pewee, Least, Alder, Yellow-bellied, Olive-sided.

Raptors: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Osprey, Merlin.

Others: Common Crow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, American Robin, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Sparrow, Common Starling, Rock Dove, Purple Finch, Common Flicker, Blue Jay, Common Snipe, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Swainson's Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo.

I fared not nearly so well at the shore, where I identified two far-off groups as Black Specks and White Dots. Golden Guide made no mention of these. A fellow birder informed me they were Brant and Wigeon. I took his word, but I won't add them to my life list on heresay. The other shore species were: Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Great Black-backed Gull, Horned Lark, Greater Yellowlegs, Great Blue Heron, Black Duck.

On the way out of the Park, a Belted Kingfisher hovered over the water with its manic wingflap, then plummeted for a meal. It was a satisfying conclusion to a splendid morning.

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→ MacGuigan (AMG), Gerard "Buddy" MacIntyre (G"B"M), Dorothy MacLeod (DM), Joyce MacLeod (JM), Darren Martin (DM), Dan McAskill (JDM), Mary Iynn McCourt (MLM), Phil Michael (PM), Krista Pollard (KP), Geraldine Porter (GP), Julie Singleton (JS), Bruce Smith (BMS), Jeff Smith (JS), Miriam West (MW), John Wright (JW).