

NEW BIRD RECORD - COMMON RINGED PLOVER:

by Ray Cooke

During the 1999 Autumn Birding Classic on October 2 while at East Point, a small Charadrius plover was seen at the cliff's edge. Initially spotted by Eric Marcum, it stayed in an open area adjacent to the water's edge for several minutes. The preliminary identification was as a Semi-palmated Plover. Under a high degree of magnification, the bird seemed slightly odd for a Semi-palmated Plover and was observed more closely for several minutes. It was viewed under 60X magnification at about 50 feet or less from the elevation of the cliff. It eventually moved away from seaweed in which it was standing and it was seen to have no webbing between the inner toes. The feet were observed under a high degree of magnification from above and in good light. At that time we were about 20-25 feet away from the bird looking down upon it. Photographs were being attempted but the bird flushed before any pictures could be obtained. The bird called as it flew.



Initially the bird was identified as being a juvenile. The head shape seemed to be off for a Semi-palmated Plover. The bill seemed to be of moderate length and afterwards was compared with several field guides as well as more detailed texts and articles and seemed to fit for a Common Ringed Plover. A faint area of orange-yellow was noted at the base of the bill. The facial pattern showed significant white behind the eye and under high magnification at close range, no eye ring was seen. White areas above the bill were noted to be contiguous with the supercilium. Unfortunately, primary feather extension was not noted during the sighting. The breast band was seen well during observation of the bird before it was tentatively identified as a Common Ringed Plover and was seen to change as the bird changed posture. During the best views when the bird extended itself upwards, the breast band was noted to be very thin in the bird's central chest.

When the bird flew it called and was heard well. The call was noted to have two syllables and was drawn out on the first syllable. The call note was not hurried as the Semi-palmated Plover's call can seem. Checking with the National Geographic Guide recordings the call matched the call of the Common Ringed Plover. The call note is listed as being the best distinguishing feature of the birds in juvenile plumage. The combination of call as well as the exceptional view of the bird's feet leads me to conclude that the bird was a Common Ringed plover.

LEAFHOPPERS AND THEIR RELATIVES IN P.E.I.:

A summary of Dr. Andy Hamilton' work

In August, entomologist Dr. Andy Hamilton was on Prince Edward Island, doing what he likes best for his work with Agriculture Canada in Ottawa. Andy is Canada's only authority in the taxonomy of leafhoppers and their relatives, and was kind enough to sample some protected and candidate natural areas across the province. Leafhoppers are small, homopterous insects that feed on plant juices; their relatives include cicadas and spittlebugs (most people will be familiar with the spittle if not the bugs themselves).

In his time here, Andy identified an amazing 133 species, including 57 new provincial records and seven new Maritime records! Of 18 sites sampled, the West Point Dunes proved to be the premier site for interesting discoveries, with 28 species found, including four new Maritime records, an undescribed species known from only four other sites in the world, and a species never before collected outside a bog! Other interesting sites include a woodland near Souris (31 species); Bloomfield Provincial Park (20 species - very near where a new Island plant record was found this year, *see following article*); Macphail Woods (17 species); and the Island Nature Trust-owned Alaska Marsh (14 species, including one which may be an undescribed species). The Trust-owned