

SQUIRRELS AT BIRDFEEDERS. A reader says squirrels have learned to jump from walls, roof, trees onto the birdfeeder and are robbing the birds of their food. Has anyone a solution to this problem?

PROPOSAL TO SHIFT P.E.I. NATIONAL PARK CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AREA.

At the February meeting of our society, it was proposed that the count circle be shifted southwest to include most of Charlottetown, and possibly Cornwall, Kingston, North Wiltshire, Hunter River and South Rustico and to exclude the Tracadie Bay area. For the past six years, this count area has extended up to five miles into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and except for a narrow area that could be covered from shore with a telescope, this was simply waste space. The National Audubon Society has responded to an inquiry and states that there would be no objection to the proposed shift. We will be glad to hear from birders who have been or who may be helping count the area next December.

WHAT IS A SNOWBIRD? The dictionary says: "Junco". Under "Slate-colored Junco" one bird book mentions "Junco or Snowbird".

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THE MAPLE LEAF FOREVER

In early spring of 1976, while banding birds on a small island in the St. Lawrence River, I had occasion to cut some poles to support a mist net. The net was set up at a cave entrance which was half-way up a steep cliff, and when the netting was done, one of the poles was inadvertently tossed into the cave. This young mountain maple sapling, 2 m long and 3 cm thick, was not to be cast off so lightly. Despite being sawed off squarely, top and bottom, life within it was not ended. In a matter of weeks, its winter buds had sprouted fresh twigs and leaves. However, it did not extend roots into the gravel bed on which it rested.

How can a tree grow without roots or soil? The answer is simple: any plant needs only air, water, light and minerals for growth, and the difference between a lowly lichen or liverwort, and a highly specialized flowering plant, is simply the systems evolved to meet these needs. So this mountain maple, deprived of its roots, survived by reverting to the tactics of a primitive lichen, sucking its sustenance from the damp cave air.

Next spring when I return to that island, I wonder if my "immortal maple" will still be sprouting green to welcome me?

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OULTON'S ISLAND APPEAL

In mid November, the Natural Areas Advisory Committee (NAAC) launched an appeal to the Land Use Commission in which it opposed the decision of the Land Use Service Center to grant "approval in principle" to a cottage subdivision development proposal on Oulton's Island. The island is approximately 200 acres, and occurs between the province's north west shore and a valuable chain of offshore sanddunes (approximately 20 miles long). Oulton's Island has one of the largest Great Blue Heronries on Prince Edward Island and the nearby sandhills have been identified as being nationally significant by the International Biological Program. These sandhills have also been identified as one of two sites on Prince Edward Island included in a preliminary study of "Natural Areas of Canadian Significance" by the Parks System Planning Division of Park Canada (October 1976). In addition, Oulton's Island has been recommended as a