

Unusual Avifaunal Reports for Summer and Fall of 1978

RED PHALAROPE

Conservation officer Nelson Hurry picked up a wounded Red Phalarope with a broken wing on June 6, 1978. The bird, an adult female, died shortly after it was picked up and is now in the Fish and Wildlife Division freezer. On the 1978 P.E.I. Field Checklist of Birds, the Red Phalarope was listed as a species occurring only hypothetically in Autumn. It will now receive an accidental status in summer.

WHIP-POOR-WILL

On the evening of June 14, 1978, Peter Smith from the Biology Department, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia heard one male whip-poor-will singing in the spruce woods near Lake of Shining Waters, in Cavendish. He heard it quite clearly and it sang for some time. This is the first record of a whip-poor-will on Prince Edward Island since the late 1950's. See Natural History Newsletter No. #29, 1978.

LITTLE GULL

On August 18, 1978 Dr. Martin Edwards from Kingston, Ontario saw a Little Gull over the Brackley Dunes around 18.00 hours. This adult in fall plumage was also seen by Jan Dexter from New Brunswick and several others. On the P.E.I. Checklist of Birds, the Little Gull is listed as occurring occasionally in Autumn.

GREATER SHEARWATER

During his departure from Prince Edward Island after attending the Canadian Nature Federation, Dr. Martin Edwards was also treated to a view of a Greater Shearwater. On August 21, 1978 at approximately 09.00 hours he saw, while riding on the Ferry from Borden to Cape Tormentine, one shearwater about one mile south of Borden. This species is listed as occurring occasionally in autumn around Prince Edward Island. Shearwaters probably occur more frequently but remain unnoticed because of the scant attention paid by birders to pelagic species off our Island shores.

COOPER'S HAWK

On September 8, 1978, David Smith from Newton watched an immature Cooper's Hawk from 13.30 to 15.00 hours as it hovered near Scales Pond and repeatedly dive-bombed flickers. After a time, several crows and a Kestrel started mobbing it. To avoid their mobbing it landed in a tree and positioned itself close to the trunk in the center of the tree.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER

David Smith also reported that Wayne Neily saw two Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, a species not previously recorded for Prince Edward Island. On September 30, Wayne reportedly saw two Gnatcatchers at Diligent Pond in a barn on Cameron's Farm. They were with a mixed flock of sparrows. We would appreciate receiving further details on this sighting and in future may publish an article on the natural history and distribution of the Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher.

RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE

Rufous-sided towhees are primarily a western fringillid which are rarely seen on Prince Edward Island. On October 7, 1978 around noon, Paul Strain saw one adult at a distance of five feet while he was hunting around Deroche Pond.

RACCOON PREDATION ON A FLICKER NEST

On June 6, 1978 Kathy Martin found an active Common Flicker nest when an adult flicker flew out of a hole in a dead spruce along Stanhope Lane, P.E.I. National Park. The nest hole was 14 feet high in a well decomposed 15 foot snag. Kathy climbed the snag (at great personal risk!), but could not reach down the hole far enough to check the contents of the nest. The side of the snag facing West was warm, so the female had presumably been incubating or brooding for some time. No begging noises from young were heard. On June 26 at 10.00 hours, the nest was revisited and Kathy observed that a branch immediately below the nest hole was