

Common Murre

Gordon and Joan Taylor from Vernon River are caring for a Common Murre which they found heavily covered with thick oil after the storm in early December. Joan has promised us an article for the newsletter on her interesting experiences in caring for her unusual pelagic visitor.

Bohemian Waxwings

Mr. C. Willms of East Royalty saw a flock of 17 Bohemian Waxwings in his backyard on December 27. He also saw waxwing flocks of 10 - 12 and 30 - 40 on several occasions near the Keppoch Road. He was not able to determine whether any of these were Bohemian Waxwings.

Paul Diron of South Winsloe saw a flock of Bohemian Waxwings on January 1, 1976.

Common Redpolls

Mr. C. Willms has observed a flock of approximately 100 redpolls in Southport for the last three weeks of December. They used to feed on seeds on the ground until the snow came. He last noticed them on the top of a birch tree eating the buds.

John Wright on December 25 had 30 - 40 Redpolls in his yard and garden in Rocky Point. He suspects that they have been there for the past three weeks.

Kathy and Clare Martin during the Christmas Bird Count on December 27 saw 11 Redpolls actively feeding along the side of the road at Earncliffe.

If you have sighted any unusual birds in the field or at your feeder, write or call Rosemary Curley, P.O. Box 2000, Charlottetown, Phone 892-4121 or 892-6843 (home) or Margaret Mallett, 53 Fitzroy Street, Charlottetown, Phone 894-9595.

To give a historical perspective to the Redpoll and Snowy Owl sightings, I have included excerpts from Francis Bain's book, "Birds of Prince Edward Island."

- Kathy Martin
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REDPOLLS

The Red-poll Linnet (*Egiothus linaria*) is one of our common winter birds, though some winters it is scarcely seen at all. In size it is less than a Sparrow; color above dusky streaked with flaxen; crown dull crimson; under parts white, heavily streaked with dusky. Males, in late winter, may be seen with rosy breasts and rumps. In autumn these little birds come in compact flocks wandering from grove to grove in search of the ripened seeds of the yellow birches. On the swaying top of one of these great trees they make a happy company, rifling the abundant seeds and keeping each other society with soft, sweet whispered notes. Sometimes a solitary bird will get separated from the flock, then the loud pc - cel rings through the autumn sky, and it is repeated until an answer comes and the wanderer is restored to the bosom of the loving flock. In cold winter weather the birds crowd close together, as if for warmth. They come about haystacks for seeds, and will fearlessly alight upon the loads which the farmer is building, having the innocence of creatures fresh from the untenanted wilds of nature.

Sometimes a rare specimen stays with us all summer and builds its nest in the dark fir thicket. Then the song of the male is a full, rattling melody, like that of the "Linnet," and scarce less clear and vigorous.

OWLS

In Prince Edward Island we have seven Owls, all fluffy grey, or brown, lovers of the darkness, seeking their prey during the shadowy hours and hiding in the darkest thickets during the day. The Great Snowy Owl alone hawks over the crystal fields of winter in broad daylight. It is an Arctic bird coming down from the desolate regions of Labrador only during the severest weather to search for mice, shrews, and other small quadrupeds on our less deeply inundated fields. Its plumage is white with dusky spots.