

FIRST P.E.I. RECORD FOR MEW GULL

by Geoff Hogan

On August 20, 1990 two visiting birders, Paul Lehman and Shawneen Finnegan from California, identified and photographed a Mew Gull (Larus canus) on the beach at Rustico Island in the P.E.I. National Park. Mr. Lehman is the editor of "Birding" magazine, published by the American Birding Association. A copy of the slide was included with the written description sent to me. This constitutes the first P.E.I. record for this species.

The photograph shows a small gull, only a little smaller than a Ring-billed Gull, with a pale gray mantle and black wingtips with white spots, standing in front of a mixed flock of Herring and Greater Black-backed Gulls. The small gull also has greenish legs and a greenish-yellow bill with no markings on it. For a moment you might think it is a Black-legged Kittiwake (especially if it were swimming) for it is the same size but, of course, the legs aren't black. The overall impression was of a neat, trim and delicate-looking small gull - quite a contrast with the big Herring and black-backs nearby!



The Mew gull is also known as the Short-billed Gull and, in Britain, it is called the Common Gull. Its range seems to encircle most of the northern latitudes although it is not normally found in eastern North America and thus it is not well known here. In these other places however, it may be one of the most common gulls. Because of our geographic location the Mew Gull that visited us could have come from Britain or Europe or it could have been from western North America. In any case, sightings in the Atlantic Provinces are rare.

To see an illustration of the Mew Gull look at the National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Roger Tory Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds, or The Birds of North America by Golden Press.

CEDAR WAXWINGS

by Bruce MacLaren

Directly across the street from where we live there is a large Rowan tree and this year it was simply loaded with fruit. At the back of the house, on an angle to the north, are two Rowan trees that were absolutely loaded with fruit as well.

As the fall progressed, a few starlings would take some berries but not many. However, on December 29, I observed 8 or 10 Cedar Waxwings quietly dining on the Logan berries. I was a bit surprised to see waxwings here this late but I know for sure that they nest here and thought that this might have been a family that forgot to go south. This quiet group kept feeding at intervals until January 9, 1991.

On that morning I looked out the back and a flock of at least 60 waxwings were raiding the Rowans. Really, it looked like swarm of bees and there was nothing quiet about their feeding. I watched for quite a while and, when the birds left, there were no berries left!

The reason I found this so interesting was because of an episode that occurred in Santa Maria, California, in the winter of 1971. We lived in Santa Maria that winter and enjoyed it very much. About half a block from us was a large fire thorn (Cotoneaster Pyracantha). The fruit of this shrub is striking