

After talking with some lobster fishermen, and our summer tern warden on Sheep Island, and based on my birding activities, I am prepared to estimate that some 5,000 to 10,000 warblers and flycatchers perished over the Bay during that time. Many 10s of birds came aboard fishing boats up to 15 miles off Grand Manan during thick fog and rain. Upon reaching shore at the end of the day, many fishermen said that most of the birds were dead. One removed 16 birds from inside his boat.

Even on tiny, treeless Sheep Island, only 400 yards from thickly-wooded Kent Island, up to 15 warblers and flycatchers spent the day around our tern camp on May 28th. Identified were: 4 Magnolia Warbler, 2 Yellow Warbler, 2 Blackburnian Warbler, 1 Blackpoll, 1 Common Yellowthroat, 1 Alder Flycatcher and 1 Least Flycatcher. It will be interesting to find out what was on Machias Seal Island last week, as there is a crew there now from the University of New Brunswick.

By the way, in cases such as this -- which seem to happen once every couple years -- the birds die of hypothermia (not starvation), induced by trying to stay above the ocean's surface for hours (water temperature 40°F) whilst soaking wet. One would think a boat would be a safe spot, but there is nothing to eat. On Sheep Island, the warblers and flycatchers fed voraciously on kelp flies, and allowed close approach to within a foot or two, allowing for wonderful digital images.

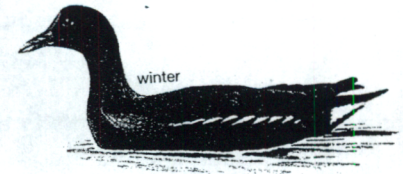
(Editor's Note: adapted from a NB Net June 1st, 2004 release)

COMMON MOORHEN NESTS AT ALLISARY CREEK:

by David Seeler

On July 19th, Elaine and I headed out to Allisary Creek to look for the Common Moorhen that was reported by Bruce Pigot. After considerable searching, we eventually headed home with no luck. Strange how water is of no concern at times like these :-)

On July 20th, I headed out to Allisary Creek arriving shortly before dawn. After about 10 minutes of searching, I found the family of Common Moorhens out in the open along the Pigot Trail in the impoundment area. One adult had three juveniles "in tow" and they were in the open for about ten minutes before swimming into the reeds. The other adult started to construct a new "NEST" right in the open. I watched the process for about 20 minutes and wonder if this is behavioural or some other process. It was fascinating to watch how the bird went about the nest building process.



(Editor's Note: adapted from a PEI Birder's List Server July 20th, 2004 release)

SUMMERSIDE GREAT BLUE HERON FESTIVAL:

by Ron Arvidson

As part of the Summerside Blue Heron Festival, Gisele Martin and I assisted with a Shorebird Viewing afternoon Thursday August 12th at 4pm. We met on the deck of the new Shipyard Market Bldg on the Summerside Waterfront. Birders who might be interested were invited to join us.

As Brenda Penak noted, "This event was part of several BBEMA Activity Days that aimed to raise awareness about our environment. This particular activity is a good way to get local people, tourists, bird watchers and "bird watcher wannbees" out to enjoy our coastal habitats! Summerside Harbour as you know is one of the best places to see a variety of shorebirds on PEI."

Gisele and I led the Shorebird walk on August 12th and three people from BBEMA participated. The improvements to the West end of Summerside apparently have not been as helpful to the birds as there were lots of people but not too many birds. We did, however, get to see some Lessor and Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstones and Black-bellied Plover - surprisingly no peeps! Other birds included Gulls - Great Black-backed, Herring, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls, American Crows, Double-crested Cormorants and a Great Blue Heron.

(Editor's Note: adapted from two PEI Birder's List Server Aug. 7th & 13th, 2004 releases)