

Page 41 - August Birds in Cape Breton, 1893

ISSUE: Issue 49

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1988/8/1

should expect to find them breeding if I made search at the proper season. Both ra? vens and crows were remarkably tame, and when I found that very little Indian corn is grown in Cape Breton, and that the peo? ple seemed ignorant of the crow's affection for sprouting corn, I felt that I had dis? covered one reason for their tameness. It was not unusual for a flock of ten or more crows to sit quietly upon the top rail of a snake fence bounding a highway, until a person walking or driving past came nearly opposite to them. If they were in a tree twelve or fifteen feet above the road, they did not think of flying away. Six ravens in a pine-tree on Middle Head remained guiet while I clambered over a mass of rocks less than a hundred feet from them. In Nova Scotia I saw kingbirds everywhere, four or five sometimes being in sight from the car window at once. I felt as though in the orchard and hav country of the Annapo? lis Basin the kingbirds must have discov? ered their chosen home. In Cape Breton, while not so abundant, they were by no means rare. On the other hand, peewees and small flycatchers were few and far between, and great-crested flycatchers...were not to be seen. Olive-sided flycatchers were present in various parts of Cape Breton in favorable localities; and when I heard their loud, unmusical call, coming from the tip of some leafless, fire-bleached pine, it always took me back to my first meeting with the bird high up on the desolate ridg? es between Chocorua and Paugus, where from American Woodcock and chicks the pinnacles of dead trees they scanned the air for insects, and wearied nature by intermittent cries. Red-eyes vireos were not so numerous in Cape Breton as they are in New Hampshire, but there were enough of them to keep up a running fire of conversation from one end of the island to the other. I saw solitary vireos in several localities, one of which was a wooded pasture in Ingonish, near a small sheet of fresh water, and a hill in which the outcropping rock was gypsum. Within an hour I recognized over thirty kinds of birds in this pasture, including, among those not already mentioned in these pages, a white-winged crossbill, a chipping sparrow, and several goldfinches. This white-winged crossbill was the only one that I saw during my trip, but red cross? bills were to be met with in small numbers all through the region between Baddeck and Ingonish. The first that I saw appeared in the air over Baddeck River, just as I was driving a horse across the iron bridge which spans the river on the road to the Margaree. The wind was blowing so hard that I felt some concern lest my buggy should be tipped over; but the crossbills, with their usual appearance of having lost either their wits, their way, or their mother, perched upon the iron braces of the bridge directly over our heads, and looked this way and that distractedly, with their feathers all blown wrong side out. An hour or two later, when approaching Middle Riv? er, I noticed a flock of blackbirds in a small grove by the roadside. I got out and entered the grove. Every bird in the flock of sixteen seemed to be reciting blackbird poetry, and that, too, in the sweetest voice which rusty grackles are capable of DON'S FLOWERS Serving Port Hood, Judique, Inverness and Surrounding Areas p. O. Box 179, Port Hawkesbury, N. S. BOE 2V0 Telephone 625-2215 or 625-2717 OCEANSIDE ASSISTANCE GROUP Providing



Small Business Development Assistance LIMITED Renwick Place 17 Commercial St. Glace Bay, N. 8. B1A3B9 Tel 849-0544 C"STLAND PLYMOUTH CHRYSLER LTD. "We Make Them the Best, So We Back Them the Best" 539-2280 Dakota 4 x 2 SE and 4 x 4 The Only Truck In the Industry with Years/115,000 Kilometres Warranty The Best in the Industry The Best Backed Used Cars in the Island EASTLAND Plymouth Chrysler Ltd. ""IJSn" The Home of the Canadian K "Where You Can Lease for Less" 41