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BIRDFINDING IN CANADA

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Hockey is not the only sport where records are being shattered by rising young rookies and hard-working veterans. It's the same in Birding.

One case in point is the "year's list for one province." A decade ago, such a list of 250 species or more was considered quite a feat, even in the most productive provinces. Reaching 300 was like climbing Mt. Everest. But, as in hockey where 50-goal seasons became within reach of the star performers, lists of 275 and then 300 are now reported every year.

In 1979, David Stirling broke new ground when he recorded 319 species in one year in British Columbia.

In Sports, an overworked cliché is that records are made to be broken. So, in 1981, Alan Wormington edged out Stirling's mark by observing 320 species inside Ontario's boundaries. In that province, a few other birders were hyperactive. Jo Ann Murray totalled 290 species; Dave Fidler and Hue MacKenzie both had 288 and Hugh Currie finished with 276. In British Columbia, Ray Williams had 281 by the end of October, then "coasted" adding nothing new the rest of the year.

Hue MacKenzie and Jo Ann Murray had quite an '81, crossing Canada. Hue says, "If we'd had any idea how well we were going to do, we'd have made an East Coast trip early in the year." Hue ended up with 393 species in Canada and Jo Ann 391. We now have 11 reports of a Canada year's list of over 350 species. These are:

David Mark	- 1980 - 417	Roger Foxall	- 1981 - 374
Gerry Bennett	- 1980 - 402	Mike Bentley	- 1976 - 362
Hue MacKenzie	- 1981 - 393	Bruce Mactavish	- 1974 - 361
Jo Ann Murray	- 1981 - 391	Mabel McIntosh	- 19?? - 361
Luke Fazio	- 1973 - 381	Bruce Di Labio	- 1977 - 352
Mark Gawn	- 1979 - 376		

Bruce Mactavish's mark of 361 is unusual in that it was accomplished with no birding at Point Pelee or, in fact, anywhere in Ontario, thus missing any chance of up to a dozen Carolinian species.

We drew several blanks in trying to establish the largest one-day lists in the Provinces and Territories. Here are the ones we do have.

Nova Scotia	- 102	- Bruce Mactavish	- Oct.15/80 and again on Oct.23/80
Quebec	- 142	- Pierre Chagnon	- May 23, 1981
Ontario	- 184	- Don Sutherland) Alan Wormington)	- May 11, 1979
Manitoba	- 162	- Eric Tull	- May 27, 1980
Saskatchewan	- 130	- Stan Shadick	- May 31, 1981
Alberta	- 140	- Allen Wiseley	- May 28, 1978
British Columbia	- 152	- Richard Cannings	- May 13, 1979

In Alberta, Eric Tull had 137 on May 27/78, a record that lasted only one day until Allen Wiseley went afield on the 28th!

Mike Bentley has an interesting record that might take some beating. In the Ottawa area, on May 11, 1978 he listed 154 species with no vehicle - on foot all day. Bruce Mactavish's big days were both totally on Seal Island and are the only "big days" cited above that were not in the month of May.

Although it must seem that we are always stressing the prolific areas, this is because we don't receive enough data from other sources. Statistics are relative. A list of 150 from Yukon is every bit as impressive and noteworthy as twice that many in some other areas. Trouble is we don't get enough input from those regions. Let's have more reports, no matter where they're from.... Please.

STATISTICAE....Cont'd from Page 18.

Brian Kautesk of Vancouver has recorded 207 species in Stanley Park and feels this may be a record for a metropolitan park. (We're not so sure.) There are quite a few other parks and birders that come to mind that may be arch-rivals. A view of a waterfront would be essential and Stanley Park's is doubly blessed as it offers both a salt water perimeter plus Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake.

But, we suggest others like the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton or High Park in Toronto would be most productive (how about it John Kelley? Kevin McLaughlin? et al) or perhaps Point Pleasant Park in Halifax might be competitors.

Sounds like it has possibilities as an interesting department of Statisticae.

With this issue, individual subscribers will receive a questionnaire on which updated personal statistics may be reported.

If you intend to file the form, please be prompt. Sorting out the data and getting it ready for publication is a big job.

You can always make last-minute adjustments by letter or by calling 416-832-1357.

ONTARIO LIST OF BIRDS....cont'd from Page 17.

A number of additional species have occurred in Ontario as highly probable, but not conclusively, escaped birds: Scarlet Ibis, Greater Flamingo, Whooper Swan, (Barnacle Goose), Bean Goose, White-cheeked Pintail, Baikal Teal, White-necked Raven, Blue Tit, Altamira Oriole, European Goldfinch and Linnet.

It is hoped that this article will stir the imagination of other birders and that the predicted species will be looked for and properly documented if and when they occur. Also, as time goes by, it is probable that our concept of what a rare bird is will continue to change drastically, as species which we thought were great rarities only 15 years ago are now being found annually in many cases. We may soon realize that there is no such thing as the "accidental" at least when it is defined as "never expected to occur again."

EDITORIAL NOTE: It would indeed be interesting to have more input on this type of futuristic approach to birding. Not only does it add one more facet of fun in the study of birds but it lends a sort of instant link with the future. It also provides a trail which can be referred to if and when some of the predictions become realities.

We would be especially pleased to hear from venturesome forecasters from all other provinces and the territories. Each area has a different mix of potential where additions of species are concerned. The scope of this type of endeavour is obviously infinite.

About the author - Alan Wormington is a Staff Naturalist at Point Pelee National Park. His thirst for learning more about Ontario's birds is unquenchable and has resulted in travels to many relatively remote sectors of the province in search of new items. We will make one prediction - that, of the next 5 species added in Ontario, Alan will find at least one of them.

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