

BIRDFINDING IN CANADA

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STATISTICAE CANADENSIS

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As we've already mentioned on Page 4 of this issue, the statistical side of birding meets with varying degrees of enthusiasm. And this spectrum stretches all the way from intense interest on some birders' parts to not just disinterest, but downright disdain on others'.

Take your pick. We happen to belong to the former group. We find the motivation, wherever it comes from, to keep lists, both an urgent and rewarding force. It enhances the enjoyment of looking for birds. A list-oriented or project-designed exercise often results in seeing more and learning much more about birds. Our feeling is, "Show us the person with the largest life list for a given area and we'll show you the birder who has spent the most time learning plumages, songs, call notes, habitats, habits and time-rationing." However, conversely, if someone else wants to eliminate list-keeping because they feel it takes too much time or effort, or because figures aren't their bag, great! Whatever turns you on. Or off! On this side of the equation, we enjoyed a quote, recently sent in by one of our subscribers, describing a newscaster informing his audience, "Meaningless statistics were up 7.3% this year."

Location listing is a popular, challenging and informative pastime. Our knowledge of birds' ranges relates directly to location listing. In this regard, Blake Maybank of Rocky Harbour, Nfld. sends us the following.

"Some people, due to the nature of their jobs, life style, etc. lack the mobility during prime breeding seasons to establish provincial lists. Therefore, there is a reason, where practical, to keep records for smaller regions which, by nature of geography, politics or reputation, are easily defined by area, and are frequented by birders. Examples are National Parks that have published checklists. The criteria for such lists include:

- (a) Easily defined boundaries.
- (b) Areas often visited by birders.
- (c) Available checklists.

If this idea gains acceptance, I'll start the ball rolling with the following lists of my own:

Prince Albert National Park, Sask. (life) - 176 species.
Churchill, Manitoba - One Year (1981) - 118 species. "

Dan Brunton of Ottawa tosses out the following gauntlets:

* Okanagan Valley, B.C. (life) - 182 species.
Banff National Park. " - 161 species.

* Ed.Note - boundaries ?

In this regard, Alan Wormington maintains a comprehensive set of records (for all birders who report to him) for clearly-defined areas in Ontario. Twice a year, observers are asked to send in their numbers to Al who then issues a statistical summary. BIRDFINDING IN CANADA and Al work together on this. We act as a mailing medium but, so far, only to those who have appeared interested and participate in the exercise. It would be interesting to see this idea catch on elsewhere in which case we'd be glad to assist.

So much, just now, for location lists. Here's something different. Barry Cheriére, of Hamilton, Ont. has figures to show what percentage of his life list he has personally photographed. Currently, Barry has actually photographed 79.5% of all the birds on his life list, the latest being the curlew sandpiper at Harrow, Ont. last May.

Barry says, "Seeing a life bird is one thing. Photographing it, quite another!"

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Reviewing our files on the best lists, by years, by provinces, we lack detail on Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Yukon Territory.

For the other 7 provinces and the Northwest Territories, here are rankings based on reports so far:

<u>Province or Territory</u>	<u># of Species</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Observer</u>
Prince Edward Island	130	1980	Bruce Di Labio
Quebec	245	1981	Guy Gendron
Ontario	320	1981	Alan Wormington
Manitoba	233	1974	Rob Walker
Saskatchewan	238	1980	Chris Adam
Alberta	233	1977	Eric Tull
British Columbia	319	1979	David Stirling
Northwest Territories	155	1973	Alan Wormington

There may well be higher figures than those shown above but they are the ones we've had reported so far. The questionnaire that accompanies this issue provides space for reporting highest provincial figures so new records may well surface when they are in.

New subject - life lists by provinces - in the September issue, we mentioned that Mabel McIntosh and Dave Mark had each recorded 300 species in two separate provinces. Since then, Eric Tull joins this select group having just reached 300 in Alberta and 302 in Ontario.

Although the September issue of BIRDFINDING IN CANADA was mailed on August 25th, and apparently received by most subscribers two to three days later, there were others (specifically in the Vancouver area and in parts of rural Ontario) whose copies took two to three weeks to arrive. We apologize on behalf of the Post Office for this delay. All we can do is continue to schedule our mailing a week ahead of the beginning of the month shown on the cover of the issue. From that point, our service is in the lap of the Gods, one of whom appears to be the Postmaster General.

This issue of BIRDFINDING IN CANADA completes two years of its infant life. We continue to have hopes that it will expand and already have drafted plans for what we think and hope will be an interesting series of articles through 1983.

What we need is a continuing expansion of our subscriber base. If you know anyone whom you think would be interested in the publication please let us have names and addresses. Better still, if you have access to the mailing list of the members of your local Naturalists' Club, we'd appreciate receiving a copy. We'll be pleased to reimburse you for photocopying and postage expense. Just let us know the amount.

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