

Holiday Highlights

Nova Scotia

27 August – 4 September 2016

Leaders: Darren Rees and Simon Eaves

Guests: Val and Wayne Colson, Joyce and Tony Sawford, Alex, Jess and Tom Rafinski, Marion Hession

Day 1: Our flight from Heathrow to Halifax is comfortable and on time and we arrive in Nova Scotia to be greeted by clear skies and beautiful warmth. We pick up our hire vehicles and drive south and west through unbroken forest that seems to go on forever. Roadside birds include American Crow, Common Raven, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk and spectacular Bald Eagles. After two-and-a-bit hours we arrive at delightful Digby (home of world famous scallops we are told!) where we stop for a meal overlooking the Bay of Fundy and new birds keep coming with our first Double-crested Cormorants, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, and a fly past from a Belted Kingfisher.

Our last leg takes us along Digby Neck peninsula, where we pause at a roadside lake, there's a beaver lodge on the far side of the water but we don't glimpse an animal although there are plenty of signs that they are about. There are however Black Duck, Ring-necked Ducks and a superb Merlin that reminds us that we are visiting in prime migration time. We then catch the first ferry for Long Island, before the final ferry twenty minutes later, to Brier Island. Finally we arrive at the lodge at 9.15pm, it's been an exhausting day!

Day 2: Most folk are up and about before breakfast and there are birds on the move through the low alder bushes and higher conifer trees behind the lodge; Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat are in the bushes; several Red-breasted Nuthatches are atop spruces alongside Purple Finches and we glimpse a male American Redstart and Canada Warbler. Clearly there are lots of migrants on the move so we walk along the gravel road a short distance, adding Dark-eyed Junco, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, Black-throated Green Warbler and a smart Red-eyed Vireo. In the top of one tree is a Red Crossbill but on the top of another is a fantastic group of Cedar Waxwings. Further along there is a Bay-breasted Warbler alongside a Blackpoll Warbler, wow!

We then divert into a clearing that we've christened The Dell, there is a flurry of birds: A Trails Flycatcher (either Willow or Alder), Golden-crowned Kinglet, more Black-throated Greens, two Blackburnian Warblers including a gorgeous orange throated male, Blackpoll, Yellow-rumped, Northern Parula, and a lime-capped immature Chestnut-sided Warbler. At times we don't know where to look, there's been a fall of migrants on our first morning! Next, Wayne finds

a large distinctive flycatcher on top of a tree, an unusual Olive-sided Flycatcher with its dusky vest. What a smart bird to end a great pre-breakfast session.

At breakfast we are introduced to Melody and Virginia, who will be looking after us for the whole week. The eggs are great and pancakes and maple syrup even better.

After breakfast we drive the short distance towards Northlight and we can't help but stop at The Dell again, to check things out once more. By now the warbler action is slower but the raptors are on the move with our first Broad-winged Hawk and Northern Harrier. At a large swathe of flowers there is a delightful Ruby-throated Hummingbird and for those who have never travelled to the Americas the hummingbird is a winged wonder, a possible bird-of-the-week?

Driving further along the track we stop where we can scan the shore and the passage. Walking towards the light we notice our first Harbour Porpoises that are travelling mid-water, then we notice larger things further out... a whale blow! Blimey! It's our first Humpback Whale and we haven't been in a boat yet!

In front on rocks, are Great Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, a Black-legged Kittiwake and two small Bonaparte's Gulls. On the weedy rocks even nearer are tiny Least Sandpipers and a Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Walking further along the shore path skirting the edge of the spruce trees and there is a flurry of activity with Savannah and White-throated Sparrows, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches and our first Cape May Warblers. At sea we see Grey Seals and a small pod of White-sided Dolphins that are unusually close to shore.

Lunch is at the wooden dock in Westport overlooking the weedy bay in the sunshine, we add Lesser Yellowlegs to the list as well as enjoying our sandwiches.

After eating we decide to drive to the south section of Brier Island to Big Pond Cove. Parking at the edge of the bushes we notice two Northern Harriers sailing close by. Walking to the edge of the large brackish pond we see lots of gulls, cormorants and Canada Geese on the water. Tom finds a Sharp-shinned Hawk and Alex finds a Belted Kingfisher. On the far edge is a white heron, except it's a blue heron... an immature Little Blue Heron to be precise! A rare visitor to Brier Island from the south.

Along the beach we stop to scan a large group of Sanderlings at the water's edge. Amongst them are Least, Semi-palmated Sandpipers and another rarity, a Baird's Sandpiper! That's quite a species haul for our first day on Brier.

Back at sunny Westport we enjoy ice-creams then back to Northlight for a last scan over the calm waters of the Bay of Fundy. The distant Humpback Whales are more visible and we get great looks through the scopes at tails and fins, at one point one whale breaches high out of the water. Nearer to shore a Minke Whale

passes and it's so calm and quiet we can here its blow and exhale! A fine way to end a great first day on Brier.

Day 3: We meet at 7am for an early exploration of the bushes around the lodge, in particular we travel the short distance towards Northlight to where a temporary seasonal banding station is sited amongst the short trees and undergrowth. Here Lance Lavolette has been heading a ringing programme for over thirty years and for three weeks spanning August and September he and a team of regular volunteers have unfurled their mist nets and caught small passerines in an effort to quantify the fall migration of birds through Brier Island.

When we arrive they have goodies in store, Lance hands the bags over to his wife Andre to reveal the first gems from the paper bags. First is a beautifully marked American Redstart and Andre points out the fine rectal bristles that makes this particular warbler a fine flycatching machine. Next is a pretty immature Magnolia Warbler with its uniquely marked tail. Tom is invited to release them! Then a smart Ovenbird is produced by magic, with its fine streaks, stripey head and big eye. Joyce is invited to handle this one and watches it flutters from her palm. Next an exquisite bright Wilson's Warbler that Tony releases (it will be his number one bird!) Assistants Gerry, Ron and Peter enter with more rustling bags and Andre starts revealing catches from the second round: American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Slate-coloured Junco immature, Black-and-white Warbler (look at those tree-creeper like claws), Red-eyed Vireo (a squawker) Northern Waterthrush and Black-throated Blue Warbler (a challenging female). The third round completes a fantastic and informative session: Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wilson's Warbler and second Northern Waterthrush. What a treat!

Afterwards we drive back to the lodge, pick up the packed lunches and go on to nearby Long Island. We drive to the far eastern end, where we can walk to the geological feature called Balancing Rock (no prizes guessing what is there). When we arrive at the car park we see Blue Jay, Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned and Merlin flying over. At the entrance to the trail we come across the first flurry of activity. Black-capped Chickadees hop around with Magnolia, Parula and Yellow Warbler. The next flurry includes Red-breasted Nuthatches, Magnolia and Black-and-white Warbler. The trail takes us across a rich tamarack and spruce bog and then climbs through mixed forest before descending via a series of steps to the shoreline. The rock feature itself is a twenty feet high pillar of basalt, that teeters on the shore looking for all the world that it will fall with the next storm. The mist adds to the atmosphere at this special place.

Walking back along the trail birds are few but we stop when Tom spot a Gray Jay, a boreal specialist. It soon flies off but returns to sit atop a black spruce and a second bird comes in. Late lunch is at central grove where we see more Red-breasted Nuthatches and Black-capped Chickadees (but no Boreal Chickadee). And so back to Brier, to prepare for our first whalewatch.

Our boat, a converted lobster fishing vessel run by Mariner Cruises, is moored at the quay at Westport and we board, all very excited wondering what's in store. We leave the shelter of Grand Passage passing past Northlight and into the open waters of the Bay of Fundy. We soon notice Gannets passing over and we haven't travelled much further when we notice rafts of Great Shearwaters. Next are big groups of tiny Phalaropes, both pale Red Phalaropes and browner Red-necked. The waters must be rich pickings and we add Wilson's Petrel to the growing bird list. Then we start seeing spouts from whales. Humpbacks! We move into an area where six or so whales are lunge feeding and we see several coming to the surface chin first, with extended throat pleats as they take mouthfuls of bait. The whales are bubble-netting, so before they surface we can see an area of light green water coloured by air bubbles from the whales below. It is a handy indicator to the whales whereabouts and we can predict where they will come up. Imagine our excitement when one pale patch of water is right next to the side of the boat... sure enough the whale surges to the surface right in front! Awesome!

More birds come and go, with a steady procession of Great Shearwaters and our first Sooty Shearwater. A dark Leach's Petrel flies by with a more buoyant gait than the fluttering Wilson's Petrels. More whales are also in store and we get great looks at an obliging mum and calf. A nice pairing to close our first whalewatch. We arrive back at the quayside glowing and get great looks at a group of Lesser Yellowlegs on the weed in the harbour in the evening light. A perfect ending!

Day 4: A few can't resist an early morning look at The Dell and come to breakfast with tales of goodies, most of us take the opportunity to have a lazy start to the day. So after eggs, pancakes and the like we decide to strike while it's busy and return to The Dell to see if the migrants are still hopping and indeed they are. We see Cape May Warblers, Cedar Waxwings, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Crossbills and some Empidonax 'Trails' Flycatchers. Working along the edge of the clearing we get great looks at Red-eyed Vireos looking especially green in the sun. Then a stunning male Black-throated Blue Warbler turns up and approaches closely, a star bird for sure. Also seen are Black-throated Green Warblers alongside an adult Cape May Warbler. Nice!

We investigate some quiet parts of Westport where we've seen birds before: at a field on the edge of town we flush some Ring-necked Pheasants and a notice Northern Harriers and Turkey Vultures on the move, could be a day for raptors? At the cemetery we can walk along the highest ridge on the island with views all around. We see more Turkey Vultures, Northern Harriers and a Broad-winged Hawk, then two Bald Eagles enter the scene. They chase each other across the sky then lock talons and fall to earth, spinning as they go, to break off and fly their separate ways. Wow!

Further along we stop where the road crosses a lovely piece of boreal bog and we get out to admire the vegetation, especially the showy northern pitcher plants,

yet more Northern Harriers are soaring. The road ends at the most westerly point on the island, where there is the appropriately named Westlight. Great Cormorants are alongside Double-crested Cormorants and several Grey Seals are bottling in the water. From the rocks in front of the light we can scan and have our lunch. Several Humpbacks are spouting in the distance and we have a good selection of birds to look at: Turnstone, Common Loon, Black Guillemot, Gannets, Great and Sooty Shearwater and a distant Pomarine Jaeger.

After lunch we decide to take the walk down Camp Road towards the shore. It weaves past some small holiday shacks then opens out at Little Pond Cove. Harriers are on the move and we can scan over the weedy rocks. There are lots of Eiders in the water and we can just make out one Black Scoter. Most numerous are the many Grey Seals that are in the bay. Walking around the coastal path we add Hairy Woodpecker and a fly over from a Solitary Sandpiper. Black Ducks are on the smaller pond showing us their white under-wings as they leave. On the second beach at Big Pond Cove there are the same group of Sanderling with Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers.

We have some downtime back at the lodge, then catch the ferry as foot passengers as tonight's meal is on neighbouring Long Island at Lavena's Catch Café and very nice it is too!

Day 5: It's our big day on the Bay of Fundy, so after breakfast we drive to the harbour at Westport to meet Captain Harold and the team at Brier Island Whale and Seabird Cruises for a big adventure. He and his crew are as excited as us to get out after a troublesome week that has seen the good ship Mega Nova in dock for repairs. So it's a maiden voyage for a new piston then!

We are joined by four of the banders, keen to see some pelagic bird species and like kids in a candy store we steam north through Grand Passage towards the open sea. Wayne spots a Bald Eagle in the trees and at the mouth there are several Harbour Porpoises in boisterous mood, the first cetacean. Its not long before we see our first blow, always worth checking out. We move nearer and it surfaces again. It has a long back and no fin! Wow! We move closer and wait for another view. Sure enough it blows and comes to the surface revealing its strange head encrusted with callosities followed by its long smooth finless back, and as it rolls to dive it shows two clean sharp black flukes – it's a Northern Right Whale – the rarest whale in the world! What a start to the day! We stay with the animal for 45 minutes or so trying to get some photos so that the researchers can identify the individual. We get good looks as each time it repeats the surfacing and diving routine. What a privilege to see.

We move away from the whale, sailing further north and soon we see our first Great Shearwaters and both Red and Red-necked Phalaropes. These are followed by progressively bigger flocks of these ocean going birds. Sooty shearwaters pass by too.

Harold spots more blows ahead, this time from Humpback whales so we move towards them for a look. Shelley, the head researcher aboard, is quick to identify the whales by the distinctive pattern on their flukes. We have 'Doublet' and 'Rooftop'. We watch them surface and shallow dive as they are feeding. There are lots of attending shearwaters looking for titbits and Simon's sharp eyes picks out something unusual. Amongst the large raft of Great Shearwaters is a single bird with dusky markings and a pale bill – a Cory's Shearwater – a rarity in Nova Scotia. We move around the group and we scan through the flock and find a smaller Manx Shearwater too!

Next we move along a line of deeper water looking for activity, there are more birds and a few Humpbacks but we move further west to deeper water and an area of underwater ridges. We get a show from two young Parasitic Jaegers, Arctic Skuas. Simon also yells out 'Skua!' and in the distance is a very black bird with white wing patches, a South Polar Skua a long way from home! A second bird flies by a little later on but by now we are in the thick of a busy section of the Bay of Fundy. We are reminded of how productive a region of the sea this is, across the water in all directions are blows from big whales and the surface is alive with the quick bursts from over a hundred dolphins. It's a feeding frenzy with Humpback flukes showing across the scene. Two blows are really tall and we get great looks at mighty Fin Whales, the second biggest animal on earth. It's rare to get close to these leviathans and we manage to travel close alongside for a while, seeing their paleish markings behind the blowhole, their long smooth back and strong swept back fin. They are so sleek that they need only flex their spine to dive and rarely show their tails. Awesome! The White-sided Dolphins give us a great show too with busy groups criss-crossing as they feed close to the surface. And of course there are more great looks at Humpbacks at the surface, a real finale the a most wonderful full day in the Bay of Fundy.

Day 6: We wake to blanket fog across the island so there is no urgency during breakfast! Afterwards we decide to check the horseshoe bay around Freeport on Long Island, where we have seen assorted shorebirds before. Crossing the ferry we note that the fog seems thicker and as we drive next to the water's edge it proves difficult to scan across the bars of mud. Thankfully there are some delightful Least Sandpipers close. At a second point we can walk to a small pool that proves productive. A large white Great Egret is on the far edge and there are several peeps on the mud. This time they are mostly Semi-palmated Sandpipers with a few Least. Black Duck and Green-winged Teal are added to the list. Further around we get great looks at confiding Great Blue Heron and a smart Merlin on the wires. Alex spots a Sharp-shinned Hawk on a small treetop.

We take an early lunch at the dock at Westport and we wonder what our third boat trip has in store. There is still lots of fog about and so it should be interesting for sure.

We board Mega Nova and are introduced to some different faces to yesterday, Captain Ray is in charge. We are soon moving slowly through Grand Passage and

at times we cannot see either side. We can hear the foghorn going at Northlight and there is an eerie feel as we enter the open sea and it is as flat as the proverbial mill-pond. It's difficult to see where the water ends and the fog begins. We carry on regardless and after a short while we notice the first of many Great Shearwaters. More birds start appearing with the usual suspects featuring: Great Shearwater, both phalarope species, Gannet, Puffin and a nice close Sooty Shearwater. After a while we stop engines and listen... sure enough we hear blows ahead and move in to investigate.

A whalewatch boat appears in the mist and as we move round where we can see that there are two whales to the side of it. They are rolling at the surface then dive to disappear. We move around trying to locate the pair. Again we can hear through the fog and move to try and get a view again. We see them acting curiously around the other boat and we cut our engines. What happens next is amazing. They move away from the first boat and swim towards Mega Nova and shallow dive underneath our hull. Looking down through the water the full size of the whales are evident – they are huge and with their white pectoral fins gleaming underwater they look like aircraft beneath us. They surface with explosive blows and trumpeting then dive beneath the boat again to surface the other side. Next they approach on their back then flex upwards pushing their fronts high out of the water to 'spyhop'. Just who is looking at who? Totally amazing!

By now the mist has lifted and we can scan the smooth water for miles in all directions. We move on and can see that there are more whales further out. We get alongside two more obliging Humpbacks and watch them lounging on the surface before diving. There are distant blows and glimpses of dolphin fins but we have a time limit on today's trip. We make our way back to shore noting a Minke Whale on the way. Another super time on the Bay of Fundy.

Day 7: After an early breakfast we visit the Banding Station for the second time. Lance and the team have been busy since first light but they report a slower passage than expected. Nevertheless the first round of bags reveal some lovely birds: American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Magnolia Warbler.

Peter returns after a second round of the nets and he is smiling and passes the bag to Lance then goes for his camera – it must be something interesting. Lance peers into the bag and smiles, it looks like somebody's wishes are about to become true. With a flourish worthy of a magician Lance produces a Mourning Warbler – a new bird for Simon and a belated birthday pressie! The third round has three birds to offer but a variety nevertheless: first is a richly coloured Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, second a Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warbler and finally a Magnolia Warbler.

It's been another great session with the banders, next we proceed to the south of the island, where we park and walk towards Pond Cove. Working the edge

of Big Pond we can see lots of gulls on the spit but sadly no waders. Along the edge of the water are several Great Blue Herons and there are lots of Double-crested Cormorants on show. Waterfowl include Black Duck and Canada Geese. Northern Harriers drift by and Alex spots a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Crossing over the shingle we can scan along the beach and the high tide has pushed many peeps to scurry along the stranded weed. We can get very close to the birds and get wonderful looks at sparkling Sanderling, with a smattering of Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers and some Semi-palmated Plovers. At sea there are lots of Eiders and Alex finds two Black Scoter showing well in the sun. Further along the beach we locate a scarce Baird's Sandpiper amongst the 'peeps'.

It's been a great morning and we drive to Westport to our regular picnic spot on the dock, two fine Bald Eagles are soaring over. After lunch we drive to the nearby Slocum Memorial that overlooks the narrow channel between Brier and Peter's Island. Joshua Slocum is Brier Island's most celebrated son, being the first person to circumnavigate the globe single-handedly, if that's not worthy of a monument then what is? From here we can scan the large gathering of gulls and cormorants on the Peter's Island and we note that there's the Great Egret that we saw the day before on Long Island. At one point the gulls to the right get up and another Bald Eagle flies across the water. Around the back streets of Westport we take a look to see if we can locate a couple of scarce residents, we've seen Cardinal and Bluebird here at the old school before but the stiff wind doesn't help find birds perched atop bushes. There are lots of Goldfinches though (and a Red-eyed Vireo).

Most of the group have a fourth whalewatch trip planned so we return to the lodge to prepare. Half an hour later we are signing forms (ominous?), donning survival suits and getting ready for our zodiac trip across the Bay of Fundy. Eleven of us are led by Guy, an unlikely looking Captain for a high adventure on the seas and perhaps more suitable for a caller at a square dance! Yet we entrust ourselves to him as he takes us out of the sheltered harbour and relatively calm Grand Passage. At the mouth of the Bay of Fundy there are swellings from the meeting of strong currents and we get a sensation of the ride to come, we'd better hang on!

It's not long before we see blows ahead. We move nearer to a couple of Humpbacks that are feeding with shallow dives. There are a few tail raises and repeated surfaces and from our lower position we can really appreciate the size of these beasts. We also get down wind and can appreciate their smell too!! A rare privilege, sharing their environment. We move to more blows in another area of turbulence where several Gannets are milling around. Another pair of Humpbacks and we accompany these whales and watch them dive. Puffins, shearwaters and phalaropes are on the surface, all difficult to watch with binoculars from a bouncing zodiac!

More whales blow in the distance and we investigate, getting alongside a mother and calf pair. In the far distance is a lot of white water from a boisterous whale that is pec-slapping, bringing its white pectoral fin high into the air and bringing it down crashing to the surface. We move to the area as fast as we can (which is very fast but bouncy in a zodiac!).

As we get nearer the pec-slapping continues then pauses while it dives, only to reappear with a spectacular breach! Not once, but twice, we see the whale leap clear of the water. Awesome! Finally we arrive alongside and watch enthralled with the whale showing off with lots of rolling on its side, raising its mighty flipper and crashing on to the water. Wow! Another breach, then another, then a longer pause. It slips away and the show is over but what a show! Thankfully the ride back is a bit less bumpy than the ride out and we arrive back at the quay elated, we survived!

Our last meal is a celebratory affair and we catch the ferry to Long Island where we eat at the delightful Lavena's Catch Café. It's been an amazing trip and there's still a full day tomorrow.

Day 8: Our transfer day will not be without new birds and we have a full day planned. We start after an early breakfast with our final visit to the banding station and it seems that it's a big morning – the first round brings us lots of paper bags all pegged to the washing line and quivering with life.

Lance starts to process the birds: first a Black-throated Green, then a tricky Cape May immature (identified by Tom!), then the first of many Northern Waterthrushes (eight handsome individuals). Next up are two Black-and-white Warblers, followed by two Red-eyed Vireos, American Redstart and a darling Wilson's Warbler. All the while there are birds in the trees with looks at Yellow-rumped Warblers, Northern Flickers and fly overs from Crossbills and Cedar Waxwings.

The bags keep coming and the second and third round seem continuous: more Northern Waterthrushes, two American Redstarts showing the difference between immature female and male, a Yellow Warbler and an unidentified Trails Flycatcher (Alder or Willow). Our final bird is a fitting one, a beautiful (and popular) Ovenbird. What a great morning and another special treat thanks to the generosity of our banding hosts.

It's time to say goodbye to Brier Island and the helpful folk at the lodge, we'll be back! We leave in the sunshine and are soon on the ferry, crossing to Long Island noting that things are clearly on the move (not least hundreds of bikers on Harley-Davidsons), raptors are moving and we see several Bald Eagles in the blue sky. We can't resist checking out the beaver lodge at Sandy Cove, sadly the mammals are quiet (well it is midday) but we do get great looks at Ring-necked Ducks and our first Wood Ducks. Solitary Sandpipers are far from solitary and are clustered on the far bank. An American Kestrel flies over too. Our picnic site

is the beautiful Lake Midway on Digby Neck and we even add a new bird, well just a single Common Nighthawk flies over in broad daylight but only Marion and the guides gets to see it!

After lunch we start the long journey east, stopping after half-an-hour at Annapolis Royal to birdwatch around the small wetland reserve. A well maintained path takes us around a large reed fringed pool that is busy with wildfowl. We set up scopes and play the eclipse plumage duck identity game.

Amongst the nearest group of brown ducks are several Ring-necked Ducks, Black Duck, Mallard, Gadwall, Shoveler, American Wigeon and Blue-winged Teal with smaller Green-winged Teal. Other birds include delightful Pied-billed Grebes that are busy with spotty chicks. A group of Hooded Mergansers are a nice addition and there are several Wood Ducks near the reeds. On an island in the water are a collection of ducks with both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. Two spectacular raptors pay a visit: first a wonderful Osprey then a handsome male Northern Harrier. All the way round this beautiful reserve we are kept company with small flurries of action from groups of warblers. These are mostly Myrtle Yellow-rumped but we do note Parula and Yellow Warblers. Cedar Waxwings are using the dead trees in the water as flycatching perches and a Belted Kingfisher looks for his prey. Painted Turtles are out sunning themselves and we add Red-winged Blackbird to the list, a fitting bird to end on.

From Annapolis Royal we drive along the Harvest Highway in the sun towards Halifax. Reluctantly we have to end somewhere and we have reached the time to move to the airport for check-in and a final meal together.

Afterwards we review the trip highlights and the votes are counted: Species-of-the-trip is Humpback Whale with runner-up Right Whale. Top warbler is Ovenbird.

Place-of-the-trip is the Banding Station at Northlight, with honourable mentions to the Bay of Fundy and Brier Island.

Magic Moments are plenty:

From Tom and Tony releasing their own personal warblers at the banding station.

The incredible first morning at the Dell (Marion).

Sanderings on the beach (Val); Cory's Shearwater (Wayne).

Whalewatching featured many highlights with bubble-netting (Simon), Spyhopping (Joyce and Darren) and the all day whalewatch feeding frenzy with whales and dolphins (Alex and Jess).

What a great trip!

Our sincere thanks to Harold, Ray, Shelley, Carolyn, Tania, Dawn and Joanna at Brier Island Whale and Seabird Cruises; to Lance, Andre, Ron, Gerry, Jen, Joanna and Christian at the Banding Station; to Virginia, Melody, chef John and Robert at Brier Island Lodge.

Birds

Common Loon (Great Northern Diver)
Pied-billed Grebe
Greater Shearwater
Sooty Shearwater
Manx Shearwater
Cory's Shearwater
Wilson's Storm-Petrel
Leach's Storm-Petrel
Northern Gannet
Great Cormorant
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Egret
Great Blue Heron
Little Blue Heron
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Mallard
Black Duck
Gadwall
American Wigeon
Northern Shoveler
Green-winged Teal
Blue Winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck
Common Eider
Black Scoter
Hooded Merganser
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Semi-palmated Plover
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Sandpiper
Ruddy Turnstone
Sanderling
Semi-palmated Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper

Baird's Sandpiper
Red-necked Phalarope
Red Phalarope
Pomarine Jaeger
Parasitic Jaeger
South Polar Skua
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
Common Tern
Caspian Tern
Black Guillemot
Razorbill
Atlantic Puffin
Feral Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Common Nighthawk
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Willow/Alder Flycatcher
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Barn Swallow
Blue Jay
Gray Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Robin
Cedar Waxwing
European Starling
Red-eyed Vireo
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler

Black-throated Green Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Northern Waterthrush
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Warbler
Canada Warbler
Chipping Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Purple Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch

Mammals

Humpback Whale
Fin Whale
Northern Right Whale
Minke Whale
Harbour Porpoise
Grey Seal
Harbour Seal
Eastern Chipmunk
Red Squirrel
Muskrat

Butterflies

Viceroy
Monarch
Red Admiral
Mourning Cloak (Camberwell Beauty)
Painted Lady
Wood Nymph
Great Spangled Fritillary
Cabbage White
Mustard White
Orange Sulphur
Clouded Sulphur
American Copper
Brown Elfin

Dragonflies

Twelve-spotted Skimmer
Variable Dancer
Common Greek Damselfly
Scarlet Damselfly
Yellow-legged Meadowhawk

Misc

Painted Turtle
American Toad
Leopard Slug
Two-spotted Lady Beetle

Botanical List (Val Colson)

Fireweed (Large Willowherb)
Rough-stemmed Golden Rod
Purple-stemmed Aster
Common Pimpernel (Poor-man's Weather
Glass)
Virginia Rose
Oxeye Daisy
Pearly Everlasting
Common Dandelion
Hairbell
Queens Ann's Lace (Wild Carrot)
Himalayan Balsam
Japanese Knotweed
Common Buttercup
Creeping Buttercup
Wild Clover
Red Clover
Eyebright
Evening Primrose
Twinflower
Purple Loosestrife
Self-heal
Bittersweet Nightshade
Nodding Ladies Tresses
English Plantain
Common Plantain
Bunchberry
Indian Pipe
Hedge Bindweed
Northern Pitcher Plant
Common Mullien
Yarrow
Musk Mallow
Marsh Skullcap
Wild Lupine
Canada Thistle
Beach Rose
Blue Toadflax
Palmate Hop Clover
Fragrant Water Lily
True Forget-me-not
Wild Strawberry
Butter-and-eggs
Bird's-foot Trefoil
Tawny Cotton Grass
Water Smart Weed (Water Bistort)

Broad-leaved Cattails
Cow Vetch
Chicken Mushroom
Reindeer Moss