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BIRDS OF BRIER ISLAND

By Eric L. Mills and Lance Laviolette



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Birds of Brier Island by Eric L. Mills & Lance Laviolette

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Brier Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, at the southwestern entrance to the Bay of Fundy, has been known for years as a prime birding destination. It combines access to unusually rich gatherings of pelagic birds, the chance of seeing rarities in greater frequency than almost anywhere else in the province, and the spectacle of large volume land bird migrations. The island lies at the intersection of migratory routes along the east coast of North America. Because of intense oceanic turbulence in the adjacent shallow water, which is in close proximity to deeper water, rich feeding is available for nearshore seabirds and pelagic species. Of the 470+ species recorded from the Province of Nova Scotia as a whole, 355 have been recorded from Brier Island. Many of these are vagrants, mainly of western or southern origin in North America; others are common passage migrants that visit the island briefly in very large numbers, especially in autumn.

Apart from possible vagrants in spring and fall, the island is noted for the abundance of passerine migrants in autumn, a striking hawk migration in September and October, late summer gatherings of phalaropes, shearwaters, and storm-petrels, and an abundance of overwintering alcids, loons, grebes, and sea ducks in winter. The island has been the site of bird-banding activity and of Christmas counts for more than 50 years. *Birds of Brier Island* provides an introduction to the physiography, geology, physical geography, oceanography, and ecology of the island, along with a list of the breeding birds, a comparison with Grand Manan, New Brunswick, an extensively annotated list of the birds plausibly reported from the island to the middle of 2011, describing occurrence, seasonality, and abundance of all species, and a checklist of the birds of the island.



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Photo credit: Great Shearwater by Richard Stern

Birds of Brier Island



Eric L. Mills & Lance Laviolette

Fall 2011

A fascinating overview of the visiting and nesting birds that have travelled through Nova Scotia's Bay of Fundy region and made a stopover on Brier Island.

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