

**Birds and Mammals of Sackville Quarry Park**  
**Tantramar, New Brunswick**  
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Although sandstone was quarried here periodically from the 1880s until the early 1970s, the area now within the Quarry Park has been protected from development for over 50 years. It has gradually transitioned into a mix of naturalized habitats that provide sheltered refuge for a diversity of wildlife throughout the year. The Park provides a combination of still and running fresh-water; regenerating old-field clearings; rock outcroppings, low sandstone cliffs, alder and willow shrubs along the banks of the ponds; and stands of coniferous and hardwood trees on wooded slopes and uplands - all tucked within a settled corner of Sackville.

Authors Richard Elliot and Kate Bredin are Sackville residents who live a stone's-throw from the Quarry Park. Both are members of the Tantramar Outdoor Club and Chignecto Naturalists Club and have been instrumental in the development of the Park. As naturalists and retired wildlife biologists, they've kept track of the wildlife that they've observed in the quarry and surrounding woodlands for over thirty-five years. This note describes the birds and mammals recorded here by the authors and other Sackville naturalists, along with additional species that we expect to occur here based on our combined experience with wildlife across the Maritimes.

### **Birds of the Quarry Park**

Birds are the most visible wildlife in the Quarry Park, with a variety of species nesting in different habitats. The deciduous, coniferous, and mixed woodlands provide nest sites for songbirds such as Black-capped Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Swainson's Thrush, and Yellow-rumped and Northern Parula Warblers. Woodland margins attract breeding species like Red-eyed Vireos, American Crows, White-throated Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, American Redstarts, and Chestnut-sided Warblers. American Goldfinch, Song Sparrows, and American Robins often nest in scattered trees in the old regenerating fields. Merlins and Great-horned Owls may re-use old crow nests at the edge of the woods, and Canada Geese, Mallards, and Black Ducks often attempt to nest along the water's edge. Other nesting birds attracted by the wetlands and shrubby pond edges include Belted Kingfishers, Alder Flycatchers, Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats.

Many of the birds that Sackville residents see in winter at nearby bird feeders and berry bushes also roost and shelter within the quarry woods – like chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, Dark-eyed Juncos, Blue Jays, Mourning Doves, Northern Cardinals, Bohemian Waxwings, Ring-necked Pheasants and several winter finches. This sheltered area also serves as a stopover for many birds on migration. Numbers of Turkey Vultures have increased in recent decades in the Maritimes, as a consequence of our warming climates, and many of these important scavengers now roost in the quarry as they pause on migration in spring and especially in fall, when up to 100 vultures can be seen circling overhead before descending into the quarry for the night.

All told, an estimated 50 or so bird species are confirmed or assumed to nest here, and about 90 species are likely to occur in the Pickard Quarry area regularly at some time of the year, many of them during the winter or on migration (see list below).

## Bird Species Expected in the Quarry Park

|                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Canada Goose*              | Red-breasted Nuthatch*          |
| Wood Duck                  | White-breasted Nuthatch         |
| American Wigeon            | Brown Creeper*                  |
| American Black Duck*       | Golden-crowned Kinglet*         |
| Mallard*                   | Ruby-throated Kinglet*          |
| Blue-winged Teal           | Swainson's Thrush*              |
| Green-winged Teal          | Hermit Thrush*                  |
| Ring-necked Duck           | American Robin*                 |
| Ring-Necked Pheasant*      | Gray Catbird*                   |
| Ruffed Grouse*             | European Starling*              |
| Great Blue Heron           | Bohemian Waxwing                |
| Bald Eagle                 | Cedar Waxwing                   |
| Turkey Vulture             | Nashville Warbler               |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk*        | Northern Parula*                |
| Red-tailed Hawk            | Yellow Warbler*                 |
| Merlin*                    | Chestnut-sided Warbler*         |
| Spotted Sandpiper          | Magnolia Warbler*               |
| Solitary Sandpiper         | Black-throated Blue Warbler*    |
| Greater Yellowlegs         | Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler* |
| Wilson's Snipe*            | Black-throated Green Warbler*   |
| American Woodcock*         | Black-and-white Warbler*        |
| Rock Pigeon                | American Redstart*              |
| Mourning Dove*             | Ovenbird*                       |
| Great-horned Owl*          | Common Yellowthroat*            |
| Barred Owl                 | American Tree Sparrow           |
| Chimney Swift              | Chipping Sparrow*               |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird* | Fox Sparrow                     |
| Belted Kingfisher*         | Song Sparrow*                   |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker   | Swamp Sparrow                   |
| Downy Woodpecker*          | White-throated Sparrow*         |
| Hairy Woodpecker*          | Dark-eyed Junco                 |
| Northern Flicker*          | Northern Cardinal*              |
| Pileated Woodpecker        | Rose-breasted Grosbeak          |
| Merlin*                    | Red-winged Blackbird            |
| Alder Flycatcher*          | Rusty Blackbird                 |
| Least Flycatcher           | Brown-headed Cowbird*           |
| Eastern Kingbird           | Common Grackle*                 |
| Blue-headed Vireo          | Pine Grosbeak                   |
| Red-eyed Vireo*            | Purple Finch*                   |
| Blue Jay*                  | Red Crossbill                   |
| American Crow*             | White-winged Crossbill          |
| Common Raven*              | Common Redpoll                  |
| Tree Swallow               | Pine Siskin                     |
| Barn Swallow               | American Goldfinch*             |
| Black-capped Chickadee*    | Evening Grosbeak                |

\* Bird species known or likely to have nested in Quarry Park area since about 2000 (50 species)

## **Mammals of the Quarry Park**

At least 23 species of mammals likely frequent the Quarry Park (see list below), although droppings or tracks in snow or mud are often the only clue to their presence. Many mammals occur here year-round, while others some may just be passing through. Winter Park visitors often see tracks of mice, shrews, Red Squirrels, Short-tailed Weasels, and Red Foxes, and may catch a glimpse of a Snowshoe Hare, Porcupine, or River Otter. Otter tracks are often seen in ice and snow, and these animals keep narrow pathways between the two ponds open year-round. Spring brings out the Eastern Chipmunks, Woodchucks, Northern Racoons and Striped Skunks, all of which spend much of the winter asleep or hibernating. White-tailed Deer are increasingly common residents, with small groups now present year-round, attracted by apples and other food sources in sheltered corners of the Park.

## **Mammal Species Expected in the Quarry Park**

|                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Northern Flying Squirrel  | Short-tailed Shrew*           |
| Woodchuck*                | Cinereous Shrew               |
| Eastern Chipmunk*         | Star-nosed Mole               |
| Red Squirrel*             | Little Brown Bat*             |
| North American Beaver*    | Red Fox*                      |
| Woodland Jumping Mouse    | Northern River Otter*         |
| Meadow Vole*              | Short-tailed Weasel (Ermine)* |
| Southern Red-backed Vole  | Striped Skunk*                |
| Deer Mouse*               | Northern Raccoon*             |
| Common Muskrat*           | Moose*                        |
| North American Porcupine* | White-tailed Deer*            |
| Snowshoe Hare*            |                               |

\* Mammal species confirmed in Quarry Park area since about 2000, through sightings, tracks, etc. (18 species)

## **Wildlife Records**

The species lists provided here are a guide to the birds and mammals that visitors might expect to see in the Quarry Park, although many new species will likely be recorded here in coming years. Park visitors are encouraged to check eBird and iNaturalist websites for recent natural history observations within the Park, and to share their observations on these sites. These non-profit natural history databases provide useful tools for online identification, recording, mapping, and sharing of wildlife observations.