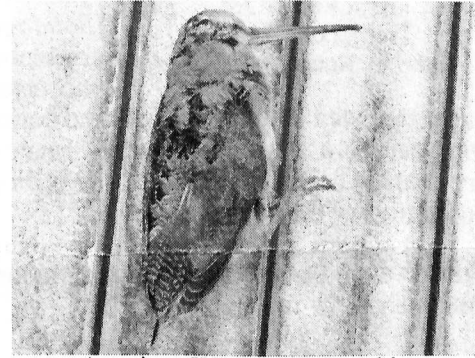


AN AMERICAN WOODCOCK . . . AN INTERESTING WINTER REPORT: by Donna Martin

On January 20, 2016, I was out visiting a friend when an interesting bird story was shared with me. As an avid birder, and someone quite interested in the conservation and well being of all our bird species, this story certainly peaked my interest, especially as a winter record on PEI.

Candy Gallant was called on the evening of January 13, 2016. Apparently a couple found an American Woodcock sitting in their driveway at 82 Central St, in Summerside, PEI. The couple took the bird in alive and put it in a box in a quiet area with water and seed. The home owners did not know what kind of bird it was. After calling a few people, and getting Candy Gallant's number, Candy Gallant, a Wildlife Rehabilitator, was called and asked to come in and pick up this bird. Unfortunately, when Candy Gallant arrived on Jan 14, 2016, the bird had died overnight. Candy had placed the dead woodcock in her compost. I retrieved the frozen dead bird from the compost on January 20, 2016. I did a quick examination and found this bird to be in good body condition. I then decided to photograph it and send the specimen to the Atlantic Veterinary College, Wildlife Pathology for a necropsy on January 25, 2016, to try and determine the cause of death.



American Woodcock found in
Summerside on Jan. 13, 2016
Photo by Donna Martin

A necropsy was preformed by Dr. Maria Forzan, a wildlife pathologist with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at the Atlantic Veterinary College. Dr. Forzan confirmed the birds a a male American Woodcock. This bird showed prominent fat (adipose tissue) reserves indicating good body condition. Although cause of death was not readily identifiable, Dr. Forzan suspected trauma from a possible window strike. A final report will follow at a later date.

American Woodcocks are migratory birds that normally migrate from their northern breeding areas to their southern wintering areas in late October and November. This certainly raises some questions as to why this bird was found here this time of year.