

THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST

No. 102
March to June 2001



Junco, Junco hyemalis

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Return address: HFN, c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, NS, B3H 3A6

HFN

is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and holds Registered Charity status with Revenue Canada. Tax-creditable receipts will be issued for individual and corporate gifts. It is an affiliate of the Canadian Nature Federation and an organisational member of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, the provincial umbrella association for naturalist groups in Nova Scotia.

OBJECTIVES are to encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history, both within the membership of HFN and in the public at large. To represent the interests of naturalists by encouraging the conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources.

MEETINGS are held, except for July and August, on the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax. Meetings are open to the public.

FIELD TRIPS are held at least once a month, and it is appreciated if those travelling in someone else's car share the cost of the gas. All participants in HFN activities are responsible for their own safety. Everyone, member or not, is welcome to take part in field trips.

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c/o Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 3A6
EMAIL <hfnexec@chebucto.ns.ca>
WEBSITE http://chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/FieldNaturalists/fieldnat.html

FNSN POST Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists
c/o Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 3A6
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MEMBERSHIP is open to anyone interested in the natural history of Nova Scotia. Memberships are available at any meeting of the society, or by writing to: Membership Secretary, Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o NS Museum of Natural History. New memberships starting from 1 September will be valid until the end of the following membership year. The regular membership year is from 1 January to 31 December. Members receive the HFN Newsletter and notices of all meetings, field trips, and special programmes. The fees are as follows:

Individual	\$15.00 per year
Family	\$20.00 per year
Supporting	\$25.00 per year
FNSN (opt.)	\$ 5.00 per year

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HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL



Spring is here, summer's ahead and this is our 26th year. The winter seemed to be long and cold, but was actually average. Some migratory animals and dormant plants remained active until they were stopped cold and snow.

We are asked to continue reporting amphibians and reptiles to the Herp Atlas, and to consider joining the 'Thousand Eyes' survey, which is aimed at schools but can be enjoyed by anyone.

As well, we need to protect large enough areas of all Nova Scotia's theme regions to keep their integrity. Governments are allowing nearly all land to be picked over for its resources before protecting any. It is essential to reserve wild land, and jobs need not be lost; they can be replaced with industries which recycle used materials, and which develop new, environmentally-friendly resources – growing hemp for paper, for example. But if we want this, we have to tell our governments! Please contact your elected representatives; they can be reached using the blue pages of the phone book.

HFN began as an informal club and remains true to its foundation: the minutes of AGM 2000 have been mislaid! They will be published as soon as they are found.

– Ursula Grigg

HERP ATLAS



Herpetological records will be even more important if we continue to have hot dry summers in which wetlands are drained to provide irrigation for crops.

Cards and instructions for recording sightings can be found at the Museum of Natural History, Summer St., Halifax, or the Biology Department, Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0, 902-585-1313.

Ask for the coloured identification sheet; it's very useful for those who cannot remember which frog wears a black mask, or which one snores and which one wheezes!

CB ISLAND MAMMAL RECORDS

Fred Scott asks for any past records of skunks and woodchucks anywhere on Cape Breton Island. He also wants records of porcupines from outside of the Eskasoni and Mira River areas. These are for a check list of Nova Scotia mammals; he needs our best recollection of exact place, date, and nature of observation (live animal, road-killed animal, etc.).

Send to him, at:

<fwscott@ns.sympatico.ca>, or
Fred W. Scott, 6250 Allen St., Halifax, B3L 1G9.
422-8239.

FNSN AGM

Don't forget, mark your calendars now for the always fantastic Federation of Nova Scotia

Naturalists Annual General Meeting, '2001 South Shore Odyssey'

It will take place on 1 - 3 June in Lunenburg, and will be hosted by the South Shore Naturalists Society. Their flyer is included in this issue. For more information, contact:

Catherine Pross <mcpross@yahoo.com>;
1-902-766-4667

CNF AGM

If you have never seen the Prairies, here is your chance to learn its secrets. Grasslands, sand dunes, piping plovers, burrowing owls, alkali sloughs and pine-covered hills are just some of the things you will come to know better at the CNF 2001 Conference and Annual General Meeting.

The Canadian Nature Federation and Nature Saskatchewan will hold this Joint Conference and AGM on June 7-10, 2001, at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, hosted by the Saskatoon Nature Society

Symposium presentations will introduce you to some of Saskatchewan's special places, including the Qu'Appelle Valley, the Athabasca Sand Dunes, the Frenchman River Valley, and the waters of the Elbow.

Details on the conference program, field trip descriptions, accommodation etc., are posted on-line as soon as they become available. For more information, e-mail:

<conference@saskatoonnaturesociety.sk.ca> or
go to: <www.saskatoonnaturesociety.sk.ca/cnf_ns/index.html>.

UPDATE FOR THOUSAND EYES PROGRAMME

The signs of spring are gradually appearing. If you would like to track some of these events log onto <www.thousandeyes.ca>, Nova Scotia's newest phenology website. We will be approaching schools at the end of March.

Anyone wanting to help in classroom training sessions or provide school support in their area please contact:

Elizabeth Kilvert, Project Coord., Thousand Eyes,
Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 3A6
1-902-424-6435; 1-902-424-0560 (fax); or email:
<kilverea-3gov.ns.ca>



NEW AND RETURNING



Glenda Bollivar
Sharon Taylor

SPECIAL REPORTS

2001 AGM REPORTS



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The year 2000 marked Halifax Field Naturalists's 25th Anniversary and we would have missed it entirely if Shirley McIntyre had not pointed out that the fall Halifax Field Naturalist was No.100. Although the Newsletter was not produced regularly at first, No. 100 coincided with the Anniversary. We had an enjoyable first quarter century and can look forward to the second.

Our two major endeavours, the Programme and the Halifax Field Naturalist, have been well supported, and each achieved a first in 2000. Marie Moverley initiated a Spring Social, starting with a very wet nature walk at Mount Uniacke Park and ending with an excellent dinner at a neighbouring church hall. This was complete with after-dinner speaker and appropriate contests with prizes, achieved by Marie and her volunteer committee. We are looking forward to repeating it, a little later in the year, when the weather may be better, and more nature visible.

The Museum of Natural History has accepted the species lists from our field trips for their Site Reports, we have found an acceptable format, and Step' nie is sending them over. We are happy to be recognised as reliable observers.



Professor Nick Hill, who spoke to us at the Spring Social, reminded us of the importance of naturalists, who observe their own patches year after year, rather than completing isolated studies and moving on. This was demonstrated in 2000, when our members were active on many other committees, including: The Friends of Hemlock Ravine, for protection of that important site; the Friends of McNabs, where planning for its future as a park is proceeding; and the Friends of Point Pleasant Park, on the trail of the infamous or innocent (according to perspective) Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle.



HFN has continued to support national and international conservation bodies, and our local Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, which has also had a busy year. Their AGM weekend has become a favourite two day field trip; it was held at Wolfville in 2000. We have advertised and taken part in all sorts of surveys and are looking forward to the 'Thousand Eyes' survey in Nova Scotia, due to start in 2001.

– Ursula Grigg

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

HFN Membership is remaining steady with a total of 145 for 2000. In 1999 there were 138. There were fewer new members in 2000, being a total of 13; while 1999 had 27 new members.

Individual memberships make up the largest number. This year that was 90, with 40 family memberships and 15 supporting members. There was an increase from 49 to 67 in the numbers paying

affiliated membership to the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists.

We are called the Halifax Field Naturalists but our members come from various parts of HRM including Dartmouth, Bedford, Lower Sackville, Waverley, Wellington, Tantallon, and going further afield to Hubbards, Elmsdale, Lake Echo, and Musquodoboit Harbour. We also have members from the counties of Queens, Lunenburg, Hants, and Kings.

A few other members are from other provinces, including N.B., Ontario, and Labrador.

	New	Ind.	Fam.	Supp.	Total	FNSN
96-97	12	98	40	11	149	59
97-98	26	97	33	16	146	53
98-99	27	98	29	11	138	49
99-00	13	90	40	15	145	67

– Respectfully submitted,
Shirley McIntyre, Membership Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Year 2000 was a very good year for the Halifax Field Naturalists. There was a great increase in the attendance at meetings and it is believed this is due to the excellent speakers and programmes that were offered, thanks to Marie Moverley, the Programme Director. Thus, the membership revenue was up \$373 in 1999 to \$2,585 for the year. The budget projection was \$2,500; so revenue was \$85 over expectation. This year's expenses were \$1,940, which was \$146 less than last year – 1999. The lower expenses last year were attributed to the reduced cost of producing and mailing the newsletter over 1999.

No grants or special projects were under taken this year. But, for the first time, a Spring Social was held; this Social was a success and we shall be holding it again this year. We ended 2000 with a Net Income for the year of \$1,270. We are in excellent financial shape. The Halifax Field Naturalists continues to enjoy a very strong cash position.

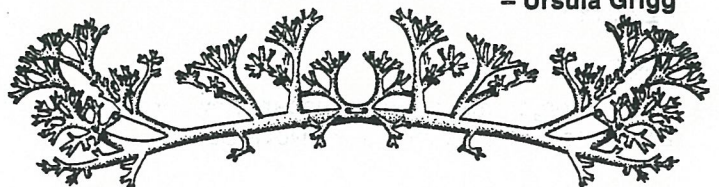
Looking to this year, our operating budget for the calendar year 2001 forecasts \$2,600 of revenue from memberships, product sales, and interest combined, offset by total expenses of \$2,600.

– Respectfully submitted
Janet Dalton, Treasurer

CONSERVATION REPORT

Colin Stewart, Chairman of the Conservation Committee, gave a short verbal report, and is preparing an article on parks planning in the Municipality for the next issue.

– Ursula Grigg



**Halifax Field Naturalists
Balance Sheet
As At December 31, 2000**

	2000	2000	1999	1999	1998	1998
Assets						
Cash						
- Royal		\$3,006		\$1,902		\$5,088
- Equisure		\$477				
Accounts Receivable & Accrued Income		\$276		\$209		\$132
Inventories and Prepaids		\$1,031		\$1,121		\$1,254
Investments		\$13,908		\$13,908		\$9,908
Fixed Assets		\$0		\$0		\$0
		<u>\$18,897</u>		<u>\$17,140</u>		<u>\$16,381</u>
Liabilities and Surplus						
Accounts Payable						
- General		\$340		\$294		\$50
- FNSN		\$335		\$235		\$300
Surplus						
- Restricted		\$10,081		\$9,919		\$9,695
- Unrestricted		\$7,961		\$6,692		\$6,337
	\$18,021.56		\$16,611		\$16,031	
		<u>\$18,697</u>		<u>\$17,140</u>		<u>\$16,381</u>

FNSN BOARD MEETING

The FNSN Board met on February 4. I think that the the following items will be of particular interest to member clubs.

The federal Endangered Species Legislation (ESL) is back, and still deficient. June is a likely target date for passing the bill, so there's time to get our ideas across.

We are all encouraged to speak to (or otherwise communicate with) MPs, especially during spring break, when they're home in their constituencies.

Priorities remain the same as with the SARA bill that died with the election call:

- mandatory habitat protection
- a well-defined stewardship program
- mandatory species protection (a safety net in cases of provincial dereliction in protecting endangered species).
- a science-based (not political) listing process



As of this writing, I notice that the CNF Web site (www.cnf.ca) is not yet up to speed on the latest bill, but I would expect it to be a good source of information soon.

The FNSN Board supports the upcoming management planning exercise for the Tobetic Wilderness Area (the largest in Nova Scotia). FNSN will have direct input, but also encourages members to contribute to the process. Priorities are conservation and protection, and passive recreation.

HRM is not too far away from the Tobetic to contribute. Wilderness Planner Leif Helmer is eager to talk to anyone or any group that would like to make a submission. Send your submissions to:

**Leif Helmer, Protected Areas Coordinator (W. Region)
Department of the Environment, Protected Areas
Division 60 Logan Rd, Bridgewater, NS B4V 3J8
1-902-543-4685, 1-902-527-5480 (fax); or
<helmerpl@gov.ns.ca>**

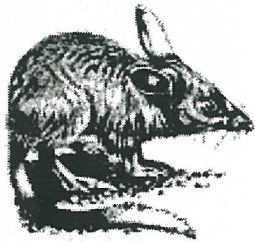
(cont'd on page 8)



HFN TALKS

THE APPALACHIANS 4 JANUARY

Howard Donahoe talked about mountain building, using the Appalachian chain as an example; the northern end of this range extends into Atlantic Canada, where it has undergone the effects of changing climate, and the encroachment and regression of old oceans, during its development between 470 and 260 million years before present. Mountain ranges are formed along the borders of tectonic plates, where these run into, and over, each other. Any addition of rock, or ice, to the area causes the mass to sink, while removal of material by erosion or melting causes it to rise. Rock chemistry plays a part, as retreating oceans leave deposits of limestone, gypsum or salt. Aridity leaves sand deposits, and volcanoes leave volcanic rocks and intrusions. It is the geologist's job to puzzle out what has happened and when, and in the process, solve a lot of other fascinating questions. (the geology of Nova Scotia is frequently referred to as 'chaotic'. Ed.)



NEW ZEALAND 1 FEBRUARY

Betty and Colin Stewart spent a month in New Zealand last fall, making two long camping trips and a few day trips from a base with friends at Christchurch, and paying particular attention to the park system.

New Zealand is formed from two volcanic islands which in the ocean at the junction of two adjoining tectonic plates 80 million years ago so has had less time to mature its landscape and develop an endemic flora and fauna before human occupation than most lands. A grasshopper species blew in in a swarm in 182, recorded by the Chinese, and Monarch butterflies recently under their own steam. North Island still has volcanoes, all but one active, and the latest eruption was in 1997. South Island is ridged and mountainous.

The few national parks are wild and have no amenities; smaller parks (Motor Parks, for campers) are all private, and are excellent. Betty appreciated the clean and well-appointed kitchens, where everything was left spotless by the last user and not even small appliances were stolen.

They visited the Kiwi Pavilion, where these feisty nocturnal birds are active under reversed daylight hours. Their souvenirs included a wooden statuette of a kiwi pulling worms, and a stuffed toy made of opossum fur - opossums were introduced and cannot be eradicated. Introductions began with the Maoris who displaced earlier settlers 800 years ago; and now include fast-growing conifers and more sheep than people due to European settlement. Colin showed slides of a rugged landscape, some indigenous plants and animals, and ended with a fur seal basking on a rock.

Obviously a wonderful place to visit!

MEMBERS' SLIDES 1 MARCH

We have seen many beautiful pictures of birds and flowers, but tonight it seemed as if every feather and petal was perfectly displayed.

Keith Vaughan, in search of a different Christmas, packed a camera and went to Arizona, from where he took pictures of spectacular rock formations, vistas of weathered strata, and gorges. He also photographed some typical homes and a mighty saguaro cactus with a peculiar fan-shaped branch on one side.

In another series of slides, Keith showed a mute swan's nest, in a reedy stream near Bootle, (Liverpool, England). The stream was loaded with garbage, mostly plastic, some of which had been built into the nest. But the swan successfully brought off several cygnets anyway.

Ian McLaren returned to the year 1957, when he and his wife spent a summer in the Arctic, camping by Lake Ogac, near Iqaluit on Baffin Island. The plant family Saxifragaceae has many small species there, and in the short summer these bloom freely. The flowers range from thin stems with bell-like blooms, to widely opened blossoms on low-growing plants. The McLarens also photographed portraits of the local seabirds.

Peter and Linda Payzant went to the Gaspé Peninsula of Québec and visited the bird islands of Bonaventure and Percé, producing the most vociferous slides of nesting gannets with their long beaks, the most meditative puffins, and the least attentive parent kittiwakes and murre possible.



FIELD TRIPS

SEWER STROLL

DATE: Saturday, 20 January

PLACE: Various locations around Halifax Harbour

WEATHER: Clear, windy, and very cold!

INTERPRETERS: Peter and Linda Payzant

PARTICIPANTS: 29

Our annual sewer stroll began as usual at Hartlen Point on the Dartmouth side of Halifax Harbour. The high winds kicked up quite a chop in the gut between Hartlen Point and Devil's Island, but nevertheless we saw several Red-breasted Mergansers and Common Loons bobbing around. A couple of Northern Harriers were going back and forth between the mainland and the island, and some very cryptic American Pipits were foraging among the cobbles on the beach.

The accumulation of deep snow prevented us from accessing some of our usual stops, but we were compensated by visiting a couple of new ones, notably the parking lot behind the Canadian Legion in Eastern Passage. We had good looks at Common Guillemots in their grey winter plumage, a Red-necked Grebe or two, and even a Canada Goose. The highlight of this area was undoubtedly several Long-tailed Ducks, surely one of our most attractive winter birds.

At the foot of Old Ferry Road, one of the group had staked out a Dovekie for us. This tiny auk was almost invisible among the waves, but with the aid of several telescopes everybody got a satisfactory look. There were also some Common Mergansers in very close.

Although Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth is clearly not part of the harbour, and presumably has no sewers flowing into it, it nevertheless is a traditional part of this trip. In any case, many of the birds there probably spend much of their time in the harbour. There were the usual gulls and Black Ducks, a few American Wigeon and an American Coot, and as a real treat, a male Pintail at our very feet. There were also a few terrestrial birds including Robins, Blue Jays and a Downy Woodpecker. The usual Northern Cardinal failed to materialize that day, but was reported subsequently by several observers.

Through the kindness of Nova Scotia Power, we were permitted access to their property at Tufts Cove, from which we had a clear view of a sewer outflow. The highlights here were good looks at both Common Goldeneye and Barrow's Goldeneye, with plenty of time to note the diagnostic marks of each. We also got very good looks at Common Black-headed Gulls at close range. While marshalling in the NSPI parking lot, several participants had an opportunity to study a Northern Shrike.

Nearby Shannon Park gave us more American Wigeon (alas, no European Wigeon this time) and also very good looks at Bufflehead. With the right combination of tide and lighting, the mouth of the Sackville River can be spectacular. However, this time, with indifferent tide conditions and the sun right in our faces, we added nothing new except for a couple of Mute Swans, and an unidentified seal loafing on the ice in the extreme distance.






Having heard recent reports of various whale species visible from Chebucto Head, we decided to skip the rest of the basin and inner harbour and press on directly to this impressive lookoff.

Chebucto Head forms one corner of the entrance to the harbour, and Hartlen Point the other. It's always interesting to look from one corner to the other and consider how far we have travelled. In winter, of course, the high cliff at Chebucto Head is very exposed, and on that windy freezing day it was bitterly cold up there. There was no unusual whale activity, although some participants thought that they saw a blow or two far, far out. There were however about 300 Common Eiders in various plumages, a few White-winged Scoters, and a few lucky observers caught sight of a small flock of Purple Sandpipers disappearing around the corner in the general direction of Sambro.

With the extreme cold in mind, we agreed to call it a day here. Several participants checked out a few more choice spots on their way back in to Halifax, such as Tribune Head. All in all, it was a fine day with lots of good birds and pleasant company.

Sewer Stroll Species

Common Loon		<i>Gavia immer</i>
Red-necked Grebe		<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>
Great Cormorant		<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Mute Swan		<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Canada Goose		<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Wood Duck		<i>Aix sponsa</i>
Mallard		<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
American Black Duck		<i>Anas rubripes</i>
Northern Pintail		<i>Anas acuta</i> American
Wigeon		<i>Anas americana</i>
Scaup sp.		<i>Aythya</i> sp.
Common Eider		<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
Long-tailed Duck		<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>
White-winged Scoter		<i>Melanitta fusca</i>
Common Goldeneye		<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Barrow's Goldeneye		<i>Bucephala islandica</i>
Bufflehead		<i>Bucephala albeola</i>
Common Merganser		<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Red-breasted Merganser		<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Northern Harrier		<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk		<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
American Coot		<i>Fulica americana</i>
Purple Sandpiper		<i>Calidris maritima</i>
Black-headed Gull		<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
Ring-billed Gull		<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Herring Gull		<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Iceland Gull		<i>Larus glaucooides</i>
Great Black-backed Gull		<i>Larus marinus</i>
Dovekie		<i>Alle alle</i>
Black Guillemot		<i>Cepphus grylle</i>
Rock Dove		<i>Columba livia</i>
Downy Woodpecker		<i>Picoides pubescens</i>
Blue Jay		<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
American Robin		<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
American Pipit		<i>Anthus rubescens</i>
Northern Shrike		<i>Lanius excubitor</i>
European Starling		<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Snow Bunting		<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>
Common Grackle		<i>Quiscalus quisqualis</i>
small whale sp. seal sp.		

- Peter Payzant

EAGLES

The HFN Eagles Field Trip in the Wolfville area for Saturday, 3 February, with Merritt Gibson, interpreter, and author of Bald Eagles in the Maritimes, was cancelled due to inclement weather. But Jim Wolford has sent us his notes on an eagle-foray of the following weekend! Thank you, Jim; and here they are:

Saturday, 10 February

The 21st annual Cyril K. Coldwell Eagles/Raptors Count of Eastern King's County took place in fairly warm (at least 7°) and wind-free conditions. The landscape was very snowy, with high, plowed piles of snow along many roads. Many dykeland roads were inaccessible (too much snow and ice), and there was fog in northern areas, especially North Mountain to Scots' Bay; and it was overcast with a light to dark grey sky. I believe that Red-tailed Hawks especially were difficult to see, without a lot of scanning with binoculars.

As usual, we sent out 16 field-parties (a total of 35 observers) – to minimize double-counting - to designated areas for just one hour (10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.), who then

reported back to Acedia University's Biology's Coffee Room. The area searched was bounded by Kentville, Centreville, Sheffield Mills, Woodside, Medford, and Canning, Avonport, Gaspereau Valley, Black River, Sunken Lake, and White Rock.

Kingsport
Hortonville,
River, Sunken Lake,

We ended up with totals of 387 Bald Eagles (of the aged eagles, 59% were adults and 41% were immatures); 94 Red-tailed Hawks, and 2 Rough-legged Hawks (with one each of the light and the dark colour-phases). Hot-spots for eagles today were east and north of Canning (88); Grand Pré area (61); Gaspereau Valley (60); Sheffield Mills (55); and south of White Rock (42). I'm sure that we missed at least 2 Rough-legged Hawks, and our count is poorly designed for detecting small raptors like Sharp-shinned Hawks, Merlins, and owls.

(A year ago we had a record 580 Eagles; another record 164 Red-tailed Hawks; 7 Rough-legged Hawks; 1 Peregrine Falcon; 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks; 2 Merlins; and 1 Short-eared Owl.)

Several groups reported numbers of Pheasants, lots of Robins, plus many flocks of Horned Larks, and a few Snow Buntings. Six Mockingbirds were reported (5 were from the Canning area and 1 was from Port Williams). Bernard Forsythe also saw 5 Common Mergansers and 1 Common Goldeneye (at White Rock?).

Sunday, 11 February

On this day there were very strong winds and it was bitterly cold -11°, with an approximate -33° of wind-chill - which prevented a contemplated repeat of

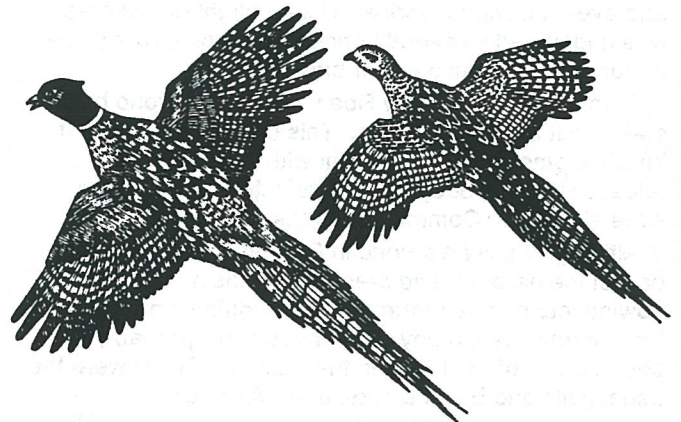
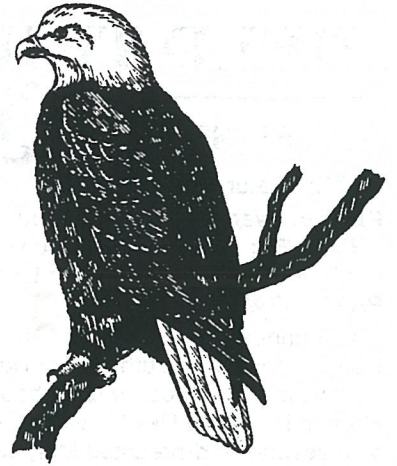
Saturday's Eagles/Raptors Count. But, visibility on this bright sunny day was perfect (if you were looking downwind!).

Monday, 12 February

Monday was still cold, but sunny and nearly wind-free. At 11:30 a.m. I blundered into a great aggregation of feeding Eagles (about 30) at the junction of east Wolfville's Highway 1 and Eye Road (which becomes Dyke Road).

There were also Great Black-backed Gulls, Ravens, Crows, and Starlings. On Sunday, the previous day, there were also 5 Red-tailed Hawks at this spot. I couldn't resist taking about a dozen more photographs (just what I need, more eagle photos!).

– Jim Wolford



FNSN REPORT

(cont'd) FNSN is the Nova Scotia affiliate of the Canadian Nature Federation. CNF is trying to raise its profile as 'the' Canadian nature organisation.

One possibility for increasing cooperation and coordination is to establish a Maritime region. Two high priority topics of interest to CNF (not just here, but across Canada) are ATVs, and – logging practices.

– Doug Linzey HFN representative to FNSN



ALMANAC



This almanac is for the dates of events which are not found in our programme: for field trips or lectures which members might like to attend, or natural happenings to watch for, such as eclipses, comets, average migration dates, expected blooming seasons etc. Please suggest other suitable items.

Our heralds of spring in northwest Canada bear no resemblance to the traditional and seldom inspire the poet within us: no primroses, lambs, or forsythia here, no tender green over the earth and soft unfolding buds. Instead we have the icebreaker battering a channel through the ice cap, smelt running in snow-swollen creeks, frost boils erupting on the roads, municipal drains backing up, and finally an inch-by-inch clearing of the snowdrifts in the garden until the exhausted daffodils push their way through the ironbound earth at last – in June.


– Sheila Burnford, in “Canadian Spring” from *The fields of noon* (1964)

NATURAL EVENTS

- 20 March** Vernal Equinox at 9:27 AST: Spring begins in the Northern hemisphere.
- 23 March** Daily average temperature above 0°.
- 1 April** Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00: turn clocks ahead one hour.
- early April** Venus reappears in the morning sky, after a brief disappearance from the evening sky.
- 7 April** Full Moon – the ‘Pine Moon’.
- 16 April** Daily minimum temperature at Shearwater is above 0°.
- 22 April** Earth Day.
- 7 May** Full Moon – the ‘Flower Moon’.
- 28 May** Date of last spring frost in Halifax (i.e. Env. Can. says there is a 1:10 chance a spring frost will occur after this date); look forward to 155 frost-free days.
- 5 June** Full Moon – the ‘Strawberry Moon’.
- 15 June** The earliest sunrise of the year (5:31 a.m.).
- 21 June** Summer Solstice at 4:34 ADT: Summer begins in the Northern Hemisphere. The longest day of the year.
- 25 June** The latest sunset of the year (9:06 p.m.).

– Sources: Atmospheric Environment Service, *Climate Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.*; Colombo’s *Canadian Global Almanac, 2001*; and the personal observations of the compiler.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER SATURDAYS



3 March	6:48	18:05	7 April	6:44	19:49
10 March	6:36	18:14	14 April	6:22	19:58
17 March	6:23	18:23	21 April	6:20	20:07
24 March	6:10	18:32	28 April	6:09	20:16
31 March	5:57	18:41			
5 May	5:59	20:24	2 June	5:32	20:54
12 May	5:50	20:32	9 June	5:29	20:59
19 May	5:42	20:40	16 June	5:28	21:02
26 May	5:36	20:47	23 June	5:29	21:04
			30 June	5:32	21:04

– courtesy of David Lane, Burke-Gaffney Observatory, Saint Mary’s University

ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

Blomidon Naturalists Society: Indoor meetings take place on the third Monday of the month at Room 241 in the Beveridge Arts Centre, Acadia University, 7:30 p.m. Field trips usually depart from the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front St., Wolfville. For more information, go to: <<http://www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/home.htm>>.

- 16 April** “The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey: an Atlantic Canada Perspective”, with speaker Becky Whittam, Atlantic Canada Program Manager, Bird Studies Canada.
- 29 April** “Wolfville Area Bird Trip”, with leader Jim Wolford, 542-7650.
- 21 May** “Conservation of North Atlantic Right Whales”, with speaker Deborah Tobin of Eastcoast Ecosystems, Freeport, N.S.
- 18 June** “New Irving Project at Avacadia University”, with speaker Don Hendricks.

Burke-Gaffney Observatory: Public shows at the Burke-Gaffney Observatory at Saint Mary’s University are held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, except from June through Sept. when they are held every Saturday. Tours begin at 7:00 p.m. between Nov. 1 and March 30, and at either 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. (depending on when it gets dark) between April 1 and Oct. 31. For more info, phone 496-8257; or go to: <<http://apwww.stmarys.ca/bgo/>>.

Friends of McNabs Island: For more information call Cathy McCarthy, 434-2254; or Mike Tilley, 465-4563; or go to: <<http://chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/FOMIS/>>.

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia: Indoor meetings take place on the third Thursday of the month at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. Phone 432-4807.

19 April "Heritage plants in the Nova Scotia landscape" with Alex Wilson, Museum botanist.

Nova Scotia Bird Society: Indoor meetings take place on the fourth Thursday of the month, October to April, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information, phone 852-2428 (recording); or Fulton Lavender at 455-4966; or go to: <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc/>>.

31 March "Baccaro and Blanche Peninsula", with leader Donna Ensor, 875-4269.

26 April "The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey: an Atlantic Canada Perspective", with speaker Becky Whittam, Atlantic Canada Program Manager, Bird Studies Canada.

24 May "Ecotouring and Birding in Costa Rica and Trinidad", with speaker Jim Wolford.

14 April "Martinique Beach", with leader Ian McLaren, 429-7024.

29 April "Wolfville Area", with leader Jim Wolford, 542-7650.

5 May "Cape Sable Island", with leader Murray Newell, 745-3340.

19 May "Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary", with Terry Paquet. Co-Leader: Andrew Macfarlane, 506-364-9188.

26 May "Annapolis Royal/Belleisle", with leader Sharon Hawboldt, 902-665-4105.

27 May "Shubenacadie Area", with leader Roslyn McPhee, 902-758-3265.

Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society: Monthly meetings and organised visits to lighthouses, including boat trips to islands. For more info, phone Dan Conlin, 424-6442; or go to: <<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/heritage/nslps/>>.

25 April AGM, followed by "St. Paul's Island", with speaker Bill Budge, son of a former keeper.

Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History: For more information about programmes, phone 424-6099 or 424-7353; or go to: <<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mnh/>>.

until 17 June "The Birds" – an exhibit, with related programmes.

4 April "Bicknell's Thrush: One of Our Rarest and Least Known Songbirds", with speaker Dan Busby of CWS.

11 April "Sea Ducks: A Joint Venture", with speaker Keith McAloney of CWS.

18 April "The Hidden Species of Coastal Marshes", with speaker Al Hanson of CWS.

25 April "Terns: How Are They Doing This Year?", with two speakers: Andrew Boyne of CWS, and Ted D'Eon of West Pubnico.

2 May "The Piping Plover: Needs All the Help We Can Give", with speaker Diane Amirault of CWS.

19/20 May Annual Rhododendron Show, with a plant sale on the 20th.

23 May "Hazards of the Woods", with Museum scientists Andrew Hebda and Alex Wilson.

26/27 May Nova Scotia Wildlife Carvers and Artists Association Competition and Show.

30 May "Wild Flowers – this bud's for you", with speakers from the N.S. Wild Flora Society.

2 June "Reptile & Amphibian Annual Open House – The Pet for You?"

9/10 June "Museum Day Weekend", will be celebrated with special programmes about SHARKS!

13 June "Peggys Cove Rock Walk", with geologists Howard Donohoe, Bob Grantham, and Martha Devanney.

23 June "Dawn Chorus Field Trip to Uniacke", with Museum staff and with birder Azor Vienneau. Pre-register starting May 1 at 424-7353.

30 June "Bat Walk", at Meander River Prov. Park, with museum zoologist Andrew Hebda.

late Jun.-Sept. The Butterfly Pavilion will reopen, with live, tropical butterflies.

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society: Meets fourth Monday of the month, September to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information, phone Heather Drope, 423-7032; or go to: <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/~nswfs/>>.

23 April AGM, followed by "Shrubs and Woody Vines of Nova Scotia", with author Ray Fielding.

20 May "Wentworth Picnic Park", with leader Heather Drope.

Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia: Meets second Monday of the month, as well as the first and third Sundays of the month, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. Shows are held at Saint Mary's University, Theatre A, Burke Education Centre. For more info, phone Kenneth Moore, 826-1121; or go to: <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/PGNS/>>.

28 April Spring Show

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax Chapter): Meets third Friday of each month at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 8:00 p.m. For more information, go to: <<http://halifax.rasc.ca/>>.

– compiled by Patricia L. Chalmers

HALIFAX TIDE TABLE



April-avril

May-mai

June-juin

Day Time	Feet Metres	jour heure	pieds metres	Day Time	Feet Metres	jour heure	pieds metres	Day Time	Feet Metres	jour heure	pieds metres
1 0040 0805 SU 1325 DI 2025	5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.0 0.6	16 0145 0900 MO 1450 LU 2135	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.6 1.4 2.3 0.7	1 0130 0850 TU 1435 MA 2130	5.2 1.6 1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 1.6 0.5	16 0210 0900 WE 1515 ME 2145	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.6 1.4 2.3 0.7	1 0350 1025 FR 1625 VE 2315	4.9 1.5 1.0 0.3 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3	16 0335 0945 SA 1605 SA 2235	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4
2 0140 0905 MO 1445 LU 2135	5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.0 0.6	17 0300 0950 TU 1610 MA 2230	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.6 1.4 2.3 0.7	2 0245 0950 WE 1550 ME 2230	5.2 1.6 0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4	17 0325 0945 TH 1615 JE 2230	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.9 1.5 2.0 0.6	2 0455 1125 SA 1720 SA	4.9 1.5 1.0 0.3 5.9 1.8 1.0 0.3	17 0435 1035 SU 1650 DI 2325	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 5.2 1.6 1.0 0.3
3 0255 1010 TU 1605 MA 2240	5.2 1.6 1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 1.6 0.5	18 0415 1040 WE 1705 ME 2320	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.9 1.5 2.0 0.6	3 0405 1050 TH 1655 JE 2330	5.2 1.6 0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3	18 0430 1035 FR 1700 VE 2320	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 5.2 1.6 1.6 0.5	3 0010 0550 SU 1220 DI 1805	0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 1.0 0.3 5.9 1.8	18 0525 1130 MO 1735 LU	4.9 1.5 1.6 0.5 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3
4 0420 1110 WE 1715 ME 2345	5.6 1.7 0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4	19 0515 1130 TH 1750 JE	4.9 1.5 1.6 0.5 5.2 1.6	4 0515 1145 FR 1745 VE	5.2 1.6 0.7 0.2 5.9 1.8	19 0520 1125 SA 1740 SA	4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4 5.2 1.6	4 0100 0645 MO 1310 LU 1850	0.3 0.1 5.2 1.6 1.0 0.3 5.9 1.8	19 0015 0615 TU 1220 MA 1820	0.7 0.2 4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8
5 0530 1210 TH 1810 JE	5.6 1.7 0.3 0.1 5.9 1.8	20 0000 0600 FR 1215 VE 1825	1.6 0.5 4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4 5.2 1.6	5 0025 0610 SA 1240 SA 1835	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 0.7 0.2 6.2 1.9	20 0005 0605 SU 1210 DI 1820	1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4 5.6 1.7	5 0145 0730 TU 1400 MA 1935	0.3 0.1 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	20 0105 0700 WE 1315 ME 1905	0.3 0.1 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8
6 0040 0625 FR 1305 VE 1900	1.0 0.3 5.9 1.8 0.3 0.1 6.2 1.9	21 0045 0640 SA 1255 SA 1900	1.3 0.4 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 5.6 1.7	6 0115 0700 SU 1330 DI 1915	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 0.7 0.2 6.2 1.9	21 0050 0650 MO 1255 LU 1855	1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	6 0230 0815 WE 1445 ME 2015	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	21 0155 0750 TH 1405 JE 1950	0.0 0.0 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9
7 0135 0720 SA 1355 SA 1945	0.7 0.2 6.2 1.9 0.3 0.1 6.6 2.0	22 0120 0720 SU 1330 DI 1935	1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 1.0 0.3 5.9 1.8	7 0205 0750 MO 1420 LU 2000	0.3 0.1 5.9 1.8 0.7 0.2 6.2 1.9	22 0130 0730 TU 1340 MA 1935	0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	7 0310 0900 TH 1525 JE 2100	0.3 0.1 5.2 1.6 1.6 0.5 5.9 1.8	22 0240 0840 FR 1455 VE 2040	0.0 0.0 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3 6.2 1.9
8 0225 0805 SU 1440 DI 2030	0.3 0.1 6.2 1.9 0.3 0.1 6.6 2.0	23 0200 0800 MO 1410 LU 2010	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3 5.9 1.8	8 0250 0835 TU 1505 MA 2040	0.3 0.1 5.9 1.8 1.0 0.3 6.2 1.9	23 0215 0810 WE 1425 ME 2015	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9	8 0345 0945 FR 1605 VE 2145	0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 1.6 0.5 5.6 1.7	23 0330 0930 SA 1550 SA 2130	0.0 0.0 5.9 1.8 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9
9 0310 0855 MO 1525 LU 2110	0.3 0.1 6.2 1.9 0.7 0.2 6.6 2.0	24 0240 0835 TU 1445 MA 2045	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3 6.2 1.9	9 0330 0920 WE 1545 ME 2125	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	24 0300 0855 TH 1510 JE 2100	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9	9 0425 1025 SA 1645 SA 2225	0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6 5.6 1.7	24 0425 1020 SU 1650 DI 2225	0.0 0.0 5.9 1.8 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9
10 0355 0940 TU 1610 MA 2150	0.3 0.1 5.9 1.8 1.0 0.3 6.2 1.9	25 0320 0915 WE 1525 ME 2120	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9	10 0415 1005 TH 1630 JE 2205	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.6 0.5 5.9 1.8	25 0345 0940 FR 1600 VE 2145	0.0 0.0 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 6.2 1.9	10 0505 1110 SU 1730 DI 2310	1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6 5.2 1.6	25 0520 1110 MO 1755 LU 2315	0.0 0.0 5.9 1.8 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8
11 0440 1025 WE 1655 ME 2230	0.7 0.2 5.9 1.8 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	26 0400 0955 TH 1610 JE 2200	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4 5.9 1.8	11 0455 1045 FR 1715 VE 2245	0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6 5.6 1.7	26 0440 1030 SA 1700 SA 2235	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.6 0.5 5.9 1.8	11 0545 1150 MO 1820 LU 2350	1.0 0.3 4.9 1.5 2.3 0.7 4.9 1.5	26 0620 1200 TU 1900 MA	0.3 0.1 5.9 1.8 1.3 0.4 1.0 0.3
12 0525 1105 TH 1745 JE 2315	1.0 0.3 5.6 1.7 1.6 0.5 5.6 1.7	27 0450 1040 FR 1705 VE 2245	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.6 0.5 5.9 1.8	12 0540 1130 SA 1805 SA 2330	1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 2.3 0.7 5.2 1.6	27 0535 1120 SU 1805 DI 2325	0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.6 0.5 5.6 1.7	12 0635 1235 TU 1915 MA	1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.3 0.7 1.3 0.4	27 0010 0715 WE 1255 ME 2000	5.6 1.7 0.3 0.1 5.6 1.7 1.3 0.4
13 0615 1150 FR 1845 VE	1.3 0.4 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6	28 0545 1125 SA 1805 SA 2335	0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6 5.6 1.7	13 0630 1215 SU 1905 DI	1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.3 0.7	28 0635 1210 MO 1910 LU	0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.6 0.5	13 0035 0720 WE 1325 ME 2005	4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.0 0.6	28 0110 0815 TH 1350 JE 2100	5.2 1.6 0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3
14 0000 0710 SA 1240 SA 1940	5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.3 0.7	29 0645 1220 SU 1915 DI	1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6	14 0020 0720 MO 1305 LU 2000	4.9 1.5 1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.3 0.7	29 0020 0735 TU 1310 MA 2015	5.6 1.7 0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 1.6 0.5	14 0130 0805 TH 1415 JE 2055	4.6 1.4 1.3 0.4 4.9 1.5 2.0 0.6	29 0215 0910 FR 1455 VE 2155	4.9 1.5 1.0 0.3 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3
15 0045 0805 SU 1340 DI 2040	4.9 1.5 1.6 0.5 4.6 1.4 2.3 0.7	30 0025 0750 MO 1320 LU 2025	5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3 5.2 1.6 2.0 0.6	15 0110 0810 TU 1410 MA 2050	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.6 1.4 2.3 0.7	30 0120 0835 WE 1420 ME 2115	5.2 1.6 0.7 0.2 5.2 1.6 1.3 0.4	15 0230 0855 FR 1510 VE 2145	4.6 1.4 1.6 0.5 4.9 1.5 1.6 0.5	30 0325 1005 SA 1555 SA 2250	4.9 1.5 1.0 0.3 5.6 1.7 0.7 0.2
						31 0230 0930 TH 1525 JE 2215	4.9 1.5 0.7 0.2 5.6 1.7 1.0 0.3				



NATURE NOTES

January meeting

The weather was unusually warm and open into January. Flies and a moth seen on Jan. 1; a Harp Seal at Hubbards; 7 whales and a seal off Chebucto Head; Pat Chalmers saw a Flying Squirrel in Bedford on Boxing Day; Polar Bears observed off Black Rock Beach on Jan. 1 by Michael Downing!!; Mute Swan feeding in kelp on Brier Island; Regina Maas saw Robins on December 30th, and dandelions were blooming on NRC's lawn in mid-December.

February meeting

An Eastern Coyote spent some time around Halifax South; no cats reported missing!; Lesley Butters saw a spider outside; 7 whales were seen off Chebucto Head; one was probably a calf; Linda Payzant saw a sun pillar and sundogs early in January; planets were seen in the south-west along with the new moon – Mercury, Saturn, and Jupiter; Joan Czapalay saw an Oregon Junco; Robins and Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings seen in Halifax; Snow Buntings on beaches; Ospreys reported from the Valley and in Dartmouth; it's suggested that these were misidentified, but the Dartmouth one was later confirmed.

March Meeting

A Cougar crossed Rte. 101 in a wooded area a few kilometres before Windsor on 9 Feb.; Clarence Stevens saw a Northern Hawk Owl at Rainbow Haven; Regina Maass saw Dovekies on the NorthWest Arm.

Some web sites tracking migrations:

Dragonflies:

<<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~dbarber/migrant/mig.html>>

Birds:

<<http://www.badbirdz.com/ktbyo31401.htm>>

<<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/radar/latest/DS.p19r0/si.kbyx.shtml>> Key West radar site

Hummingbirds:

<<http://www.hummingbirds.net>>

A tutorial on radar ornithology, also useful to non-birders:

<<http://www.virtual.clemson.edu/groups/birdrad/comment.htm//concept>>.

! NEXT DEADLINE !

1 JUNE FOR JUNE ISSUE

contributions to the Editor, HFN
c/o NS Museum of Natural History
Please phone 455-8160 to alert the Editor