

THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST

No.106
March to May 2002



Bobcat
Lynx rufus

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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.

HFN ADDRESS Halifax Field Naturalists
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>>

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WEBSITE <<http://chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/FNSN/hp-fnsn.html>>

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

EXECUTIVE	President	Bob McDonald	443-5051
2002-2003	Vice-President		
	Treasurer	Janet Dalton	443-7617
	Secretary	Suzanne Borkowski	455-2922
	Past President	Ursula Grigg	455-8160

DIRECTORS Elliott Hayes, Patricia Leader, Bernice Moores, Linda Payzant, Peter Payzant, Stephanie Robertson, Colin Stewart

COMMITTEES **Membership** Linda Payzant 861-1607

Programme

Talks & Trips	Pat Leader	457-9197
Production	Stephanie Robertson	422-6326

- add Jean Sawyer?

Newsletter

Editor	Ursula Grigg	455-8160
Almanac	Patricia Chalmers	422-3970
Production	Stephanie Robertson	422-6326
Distribution	Elliott Hayes	835-9819
	Pat Leader	457-9197

delete

Refreshments Regina Maass

Conservation Colin Stewart 466-7168

FNSN Representative Ursula Grigg 455-8160

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HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL

Orion, who appears over Flynn Park, near my home, about bedtime every fall, is now standing tipsily on tiptoe over Cowie Hill at that time of night.

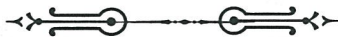
That is a sign that spring is coming, when he will turn on his side and sink out of sight until next hunting season. Spring is three weeks early this year. Let us hope that the weather will stay warm, and not freeze in mid April, wiping out the earliest swallows.

There are plenty of things to do as the weather warms up – Wormwatch, the Thousand Eyes programme, and the Herp Atlas are the official ones; looking out for Wood Turtles in Cape Breton and oiled seabirds on our shores are the informal ones. See their contact addresses in their respective paragraphs on this page and page 12.

There is also the FNSN AGM to anticipate!

Halifax has much to offer to naturalists in early summer, including the Nova Scotia Museum.

– Ursula Grigg



STEPHEN WARD

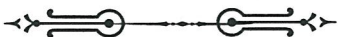
Late last summer the Halifax Field Naturalists lost a friend in Stephen Ward, who died at the age of 81.

Stephen served on the Board of Directors from 1991 to 1993, and some members will remember the tall silvery-haired gentleman with the English accent, who loved skiing, boating, hiking and camping. His work led him to stints in both the Arctic and the Antarctic, and he loved the outdoors.

Mr. Ward was a modest man who did not parade his wide-ranging knowledge, but some of us recall the quiet authority with which he identified mosses and lichens on our field trips. He encouraged his son, Philip, in the study of lichens, and Philip's published study of lichens and air pollution in Halifax in the 1960's, undertaken as a high school project, is still referred to by scientists.

His family requested that donations be made to the Halifax Field Naturalists, and the Board has gratefully received several such gifts in his memory.

– Patricia L. Chalmers



THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

One of the most exciting events of the naturalists' year, running this summer from 31 May to 2 June in Halifax, this FNSN AGM will be hosted by the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Its theme is "Environmental Change – The Good, The Bad and the Ugly", and will focus on how environmental and climate change are affecting our plant and animal species.

For more details and contact information, see page 11.

PIPING PLOVER VOLUNTEERS

Anna McCarron, Program Coordinator for the Nova Scotia Piping Plover Guardian Program, is looking for volunteers to keep an eye on nesting beaches for this year's Piping Plover season. As you may know, this is an endangered species. It's a wonderful job if you love hanging about on beaches, simply watching birds!

Anna's address is 19 Thompson Drive, Wellington, NS B2T 1J4. Phone/fax (please call first), (902) 860-1263; email, <plover@istar.ca Anna McCarron>.

THOUSAND EYES – WATCHING NOVA SCOTIA NATURE



A. H. MacKay was the Nova Scotia Superintendent of Schools from 1891 to 1927. He involved students from all 1,500 Provincial Schools in collecting the dates of natural observations; this is called phenology.

One hundred years later – we invite you to help us look for evidence of climate change in Nova Scotia!

For more information visit our website <<http://www.thousandeyes.ca>>; phone (902) 424-7370; fax (902) 424-0560.

WORMWATCH

About 15,000 years ago, during the last ice age, earthworms nearly disappeared from Canada.

Today, native members of the Lumbricidae family live only in small pockets of unglaciated habitat in Alberta and B.C.

The rest of Canada's 25 earthworm species were introduced from Europe. You can help scientists determine how many earthworm species there are, and where they are, by joining Worm Watch and learning to find and identify them.

Click on the National WormWatch website, to find out more at <<http://wormwatch.ca>>.

Or – write for the WormWatch poster and survey form, to the Canadian Nature Federation, 1 Nicholas St, Suite 606, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7B7.

HERP ATLAS



This is the fourth year of a five-year project, and some map squares still need to be covered! Cards and instructions for recording sightings of reptiles and amphibia can be found at the Museum of Natural History, Summer Street, Halifax, or Acadia University. To help out, contact Fred Scott and/or Sabrina Taylor of the Herp Atlas Project, c/o Biology Dept., Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0; 902-585-1313.

Ask for the colour identification sheet. And, go to <<http://landscape.acadiau.ca/herpatlas>> for the colourful, informative website.

NEW AND RETURNING

Darlene Burton & family
Alexa Kennedy & family
Tom Soehl & family
Jill Taylor
Barbara Whitby



SPECIAL REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Having just completed my first year as HFN president, I can honestly say that it has been an interesting and rewarding experience. As I considered what my annual report should contain, I asked myself why you all belong to HFN. I'm sure that many of you belong because of the many varied field trips and monthly evening presentations. Our Programme Committee, Pat Leader and Grace Kendall, have put in many long hours arranging the events, attending them and often reporting on them through the Newsletter afterwards. They have done a superb job and I'm pleased to report that Pat will be staying on for another year. My sincere thanks go to both Pat and Grace for all their hard work.

Others may join HFN in order to receive our excellent newsletter, *The Halifax Field Naturalist*. Editor Ursula Grigg and Layout and Production Editor Stephanie Robertson put together our periodical containing Patricia Chalmers' Almanac, reports on the programme events, and many other items of significance to the natural history community. Our field trip reports and species listings continue to be used by the Museum for its records. I know that I read the *Naturalist* from cover to cover each quarter and I suspect that many of you do as well. Thanks go to the whole newsletter committee including Elliott Hayes and his team involved in distribution.

But there are other reasons to belong to the HFN. We are a society which cares about the environment; we are concerned about endangered species, about destruction of the woodlands by clearcutting and our wetland habitats by off-road vehicles, and about pollution of land and marine habitats. We are your voice in these areas and if you cannot hear us, then join our conservation efforts.

The Board met four times during the year. At each meeting, we set aside time to discuss conservation issues often including reports from Colin Stewart who keeps us up-to-date on McNab's Island (still "A Park in the Making"), Hemlock Ravine Park, the newly established Cole Harbour Heritage Park, and, of course, Point Pleasant. You will be pleased to know that our Treasurer, Janet Dalton, runs a very tight ship and the HFN continues to be in a very sound financial position. Thanks, Janet, for all your work on our behalf.

The HFN has had some funds invested for several years now which are ear-marked to be used on some significant natural history project, whether habitat protection or protection of an endangered species. We have initiated discussions with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), the NS Nature Trust (NSNT) and HRM Parks as to where our financial support could best be used. These discussions continue.

Another on-going project for 2002 will be a nocturnal owl monitoring project, spearheaded by Bird Studies Canada (BSC), which aims to ascertain the health of mainland Nova Scotia's owl population. Similar projects are underway in Ontario, NB, PEI and Cape Breton and BSC would like to extend surveys in NS. This is a long term project and HFN members will undoubtedly be involved along with those of the NS Bird Society. An article describing the project appeared in the latest issue

of *The Naturalist*.

Unfortunately, no Spring Social was held in 2001 although not for lack of trying. People were simply too busy to participate or had planned to be away. We will miss 2002 as well, but hopefully interest in this event will return for 2003.

HFN continues to support through memberships and/or donations such international and national organisations as WWF, CNF, CPAWS, and NCC. We also support local organisations including NSNT, Recreation NS, and the FNSN. Ursula Grigg now replaces Doug Linzey as the HFN representative on the Federation Board. We also subsidise the participation of a deserving child in an environmental camp called Sunship Earth. HFN and its members also participate in many national and local projects including Plant Watch, the Herp Atlas, Wormwatch, Project Feederwatch, and the Thousand Eyes Project coordinated by the NS Museum of Natural History.

One of our long-time members and a former director, Stephen Ward, passed away in 2001. Stephen's family suggested that friends and relatives might consider making a donation to HFN in Stephen's memory. We have received a number of such donations and it is our intent that these funds be used to support a project of which Stephen would approve. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ward family for their thoughtfulness towards the HFN.

Membership in the HFN has remained fairly steady over the past few years. As well as serving as our Membership Secretary, Linda Payzant also maintains our web presence, sends in public service announcements and publicises our field trips, occasionally too successfully (our Jan. 19 Sewer Stroll attracted over 40 participants)! More members would mean that we could become a stronger advocate for Nature, so encourage your friends so inclined to join. Two of our directors are leaving the board; our secretary Harry Beach had to resign due to pressures at work and at home, and Clarence Stevens Jr. will be working outside of NS during much of next year. Thanks, Harry and Clarence, for your work on behalf of HFN.

One of the highlights of the natural history year is the annual Federation AGM and Conference. Many of us participated in the 2001 event in Lunenburg, ably organised by the South Shore Naturalists. This year's version, hosted by the Nova Scotia Bird Society, has several HFN members on its organising committee and promises a varied and stimulating program around the theme "Environmental Change: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly". The venue is Mount Saint Vincent University, the dates are May 31 to June 2. Do plan to participate!

It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank Regina Maass for her tireless hospitality; it is Regina who serves us refreshments at the end of our monthly meetings.

In an attempt to introduce the directors to the membership, we have been taking turns chairing the monthly meetings. By all accounts, this has worked out well and will continue. Finally, I wish to thank two long-serving directors who can always be relied upon for support and advice. Thanks go to Bernice Moores and

Peter Payzant.

To end, I would like to thank all HFN members for giving me the opportunity to serve as president this past year.

– Bob McDonald, President

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Memberships were down just slightly from 2000 in all categories. For 2001 we had a total of 139 members of which 15 were new members. As usual, members in the Individual category make up the bulk of the number – 86 in this category. There were 39 Family memberships and 14 Supporting memberships. 45% of our members chose to pay the affiliated membership fee for the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists.

The following table shows the trends for the last 5 years:

	NEW	INDIV	FAM	SUPP	TOTAL	FNSN
1997	12	98	40	11	149	59
1998	26	97	33	16	146	53
1999	27	98	29	11	138	49
2000	13	90	40	15	145	67
2001	15	86	39	14	139	62

– Linda Payzant, Membership

PROGRAMME REPORT

I am presenting this report on behalf of Grace Kendall and myself as we both took over the programming from Marie Moverley in the spring of 2001.

In designing the programme, partly because of our own inexperience and partly because of requests, we tried to include activities which were old favourites as well as some new elements. The old favourites included the Sewer Stroll for winter birds; the Butterfly Outings; the trip to McNabs Island; and the Cranberry Pick. The newer activities included a visit to the Bedford Water Treatment Plant; a geology hunt on Black Rock Beach, Kings County; interpretation hikes in the Bisset Road Parklands; the Sackville River Trail; Bridgewater Watershed; and two in Kings County – Maple Creek Farm, and the lighthouses of Walton and Burntcoat. I am pleased to report that on many of these outings we met new people who eventually became members.

Our lecture programmes on the first Thursday of each month have included such topics as genetically modified foods; the Appalachians and mountain formation; medicinal plants; trekking in the Himalayas; how to identify birds; organic clothing; and the Nova Scotian trails system. If you attended all the activities from April to March, that is, 20 outings and 10 lectures, you will surely have passed Naturalist 101. Two further activities, whale watching and a trip to Tancook Island, had to be cancelled, as did the Spring Social – the last for lack of numbers and perhaps because it was Fathers' Day.

In closing, we would like to thank all those members and supporters who have given their time to speaking and leading outings, plus those who provided ideas for future programmes. We still have some ideas left, but please continue to send suggestions.

– Grace Kendall and Patricia Leader

NEWSLETTER REPORT

Autumn and Winter 01/02 has been a particularly interesting period for production of the Halifax Field Naturalist. The Layout and Production Editor of our newsletter and programme moved to Dhaka, Bangladesh, (finally!), on the 17th of September, 2001 (original departure date – September 13).

While the newsletter was in progress, much extra work and anxiety was caused because of September 11, (the date the tenants moved in); for instance, a long visit to the moving warehouse to completely repack boxes that would not fit through x-ray machines, having also to leave behind many needed goods; being shunted from hotel room to hotel room due to an overload of American tourists awaiting, like us, the reopening of airports and reactivation of airline service; and other extra tasks and worries centered around that fateful day.

The Fall/01 programme was produced in its usual format, but the decision was made to shorten the Fall/01 issue to four pages, an unprecedented event in our newsletter's history.

However, our Winter Issue was back on track, with our usual complement of field trip write-ups and other reports, the wonderful Almanac and useful tide table, special articles, and nature notes.

Executive discussions regarding submission deadlines and committee and volunteer commitment strength, have been bandied about, as is usual every three or four years, by email. Some participants who had to submit items, and who had been in on the topic, themselves were late in sending them off via email to Dhaka, a graphic illustration of what can so easily happen even with the best of intentions and devising 'better' guidelines.

So far, the submissions and editorial discussions, constant editing, revisions, and 'tweaking', back and forth by email from Halifax to Dhaka, have worked perfectly for both the newsletter and the programme. We discovered an excellent, workable way to send the hefty Mb finished product by email to Halifax for printing, via a method called PDF – Portable Document Format. This shrinks the size of documents made large with added graphics and eliminates internet transmission problems.

Experiments are in hand with this issue to reduce document 'crashing' and computer 'freezing' due to ever-increasing size as text and graphics are added, edited, and constantly revised and moved about. So far, they have worked!

Our heartfelt admiration and thanks go out to our dependable dis-tributors – Elliott Hayes and Pat Leader; and to our dependable con-tributors, such as Pat Chalmers for her wonderful 'Almanac'; to the programme committee, Pat Leader and Grace Kendall, who arrange all the wonderful talks and trips; and to our Editor, Ursula Grigg, who précies the talks, writes the editorial, writes up the 'nature notes', composes the occasional humorous or scientific piece, and who believes in the vitality and value of The Halifax Field Naturalist.

– Stephanie Robertson



TREASURER'S REPORT

Halifax Field Naturalists Balance Sheet As At December 31, 2001

		2001	2001	2000	2000	1999	1999
Assets							
Cash	Royal		\$3,352		\$3,006		\$1,902
	Equisure		\$693		\$477		
Accounts Receivable and Accrued Income			\$303		\$276		\$209
Inventories and Prepaids			\$1,031		\$1,031		\$1,121
Investments			\$14,154		\$13,908		\$13,908
Fixed Assets			\$0		\$0		\$0
			<u>\$19,534</u>		<u>\$18,697</u>		<u>\$17,140</u>
Liabilities and Surplus							
Accounts Payable	General		\$50		\$340		\$294
	FNSN		\$295		\$335		\$235
Surplus	Restricted		\$10,196		\$10,061		\$9,919
	Unrestricted		\$8,993		\$7,961		\$6,692
		\$19,189		\$18,022		\$16,611	
			<u>\$19,534</u>		<u>\$18,697</u>		<u>\$17,140</u>

Halifax Field Naturalists Statement of Income and Surplus Year Ended December 31, 2001

	2001 Actual	2000 Actual	1999 Actual
Revenues			
Membership	\$2,325	\$2,585	\$2,212
Product Sales	\$95	\$8	(\$4)
Interest	\$343	\$517	\$234
Donations	\$235	\$100	\$0
	<u>\$2,998</u>	<u>\$3,210</u>	<u>\$2,442</u>
Expenses			
Special Projects	\$0	\$0	\$112
Grants	\$175	\$0	\$25
Insurance	\$85	\$75	\$75
Meetings	\$308	\$137	\$90
Memberships	\$305	\$380	\$330
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$148	(\$0)
Newsletters			
Postage	\$501	\$618	\$831
Production	\$409	\$495	\$599
Office Supplies & Expens	\$183	\$87	\$24
	<u>\$1,966</u>	<u>\$1,940</u>	<u>\$2,086</u>
Net Income	\$1,032	\$1,270	\$356
Surplus, beginning of year	\$7,961	\$6,692	\$6,337
Surplus, end of year	<u>\$8,993</u>	<u>\$7,961</u>	<u>\$6,692</u>

MOIRS POND

Last January, when an urgent message about a public meeting concerning the future of Moirs Pond in Bedford was sent to NatureNS, it caught my attention at once. I grew up in the western end of Bedford, and I used to know the area between Millview and the Hammonds Plains Road very well, and still have fond memories of it.

Moirs Pond is a triangular body of water, bounded on the west by the Bedford Highway, on the south and east by the railway, and on the north by the Sobey's shopping centre at the junction of the Hammonds Plains Road and the Bedford Highway. The Pond lies at the mouth of Mill Run Brook, which flows under the highway from Paper Mill Lake. Paper Mill Lake was formed when Nine Mile River (once called Salmon River) was dammed to supply water to Holland's Acadia Paper Mill early in the 19th century. Moirs Pond, extending over about three hectares, mixes fresh water from these sources with the salt water of Mill Cove. However, the Pond was separated from Mill Cove, and the Bedford Basin, by the railway line in the 1850's. Access to the water's edge is difficult, and it is not inviting. Once regarded as a beauty spot, its shoreline has been radically altered by rocky fill, rip-rap, and the railway embankment, and no trees grow along its shores. Tens of thousands of cars roar past it every day.

Sobey's has applied for permission to fill in about half of this pond in order to allow for more buildings on the site. They plan to use pyritic slate excavated from another of their developments. This infill would be more extensive than what was done when the old Moirs Chocolate Factory buildings were torn down, and the grocery store was built in the early 1980's. However, Department of Fisheries and Oceans regulations now require that displaced habitat must be replaced at a ratio of three to one. In compensation therefore, Sobey's proposes to install a fishway from Moirs Pond to Mill Run Brook, which would be the first stage in opening up Paper Mill Lake again to migratory fish. Sobey's also has plans for a landscaped shoreline park with walking trails.

My memories of Bedford begin in the late 1960's, when as children we paddled in the Basin's waters, explored the tide-pools, fished for minnows, and at low tide leaped across the rocky ledges to Crosby Island. We pondered the meaning of old Roman numerals incised in the rocky outcrops, and had fantasies of finding Duc d'Anville's treasure. Concern about pollution levels brought an end to the swimming, but as I walked to school daily along the Bedford Highway, tantalized by the delicious fragrance of roasting cocoa beans, I watched the ducks along the shore and the Ospreys which soared overhead, and gathered Pussy Willows along the roadside. Bedford grew and as developers filled in some of the cove, all these enjoyable aspects of its natural shoreline faded. A substantial portion of Moirs Pond was filled in during the 1980's to create the Sobey's parking lot. The magnificent stand of White Pine, which once marched down from the hills beyond Wyatt Road and Pine Drive, to the roadside across from Moirs Pond, was felled to make way for condominiums. (The ancestors of those pines were cut down in colonial times to become masts for the Royal Navy; it is ironic

that this generation was levelled to make room for a development called "Nelson's Landing".)

My first reaction to news of Sobey's proposal was skepticism that anyone would object to more development around an already much-degraded area. At a time when we are losing our dwindling stands of old-growth forest, and rivers in the Tobeatic have been threatened by mining, Moirs Pond seems an unlikely subject for environmental activism. Yet a public information meeting of the Bedford Waters Advisory Committee on January 14th, called at the initiative of Councillor Len Goucher, was attended by nearly 200 people.

Perhaps cynically, I assumed that those who were opposed to the project would be concerned only about aesthetic matters, and the waterfront views from their homes. This was not the case. I was impressed by the attentive interest with which people listened to the speakers, and asked for more information. The issues are complex, and there are questions of jurisdiction and ownership, as well as environmental concerns. These include the chemistry of pyritic slate and its impact on marine water quality; alteration of tidal action and flushing near the water treatment plant's outfall; inhibition of bird movements; and disruption of a salmon spawning area.

Many residents, including a number of children, expressed their concern for the loss of wildlife habitat in their midst. There are no endangered species here, no glamorous fauna. Yet this degraded area still offers a feeding and resting place to many water birds, including migratory ducks and gulls, which winter in the Basin. Loons and herons are regular during migration, and eagles and Osprey, which nest in the western hills, hunt over these waters constantly in summer. All these birds are attracted by a healthy population of fish and other marine life, which also draws the occasional seal in winter, as well as Mink.

It is easy to be preoccupied with the need to save large tracts of wilderness areas in Nova Scotia, and this urban area hardly seems of comparable importance. Yet this bit of open water, which still affords an expansive view across the Bedford Basin, not yet obstructed by high-rise condos, is known and loved by many, and the waterbirds which are found there are perhaps the only truly wild creatures they regularly see. In a recent issue of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists News, Doug Linzey's editorial and article on "Citizen Participation" reminded us that "The forces of development often seem to be overwhelming... As citizens, we have to speak out and act in favour of long-term sense and sanity." The first step is to inform ourselves about the problems that we see, and speak up about what concerns us. I learned a great deal by attending this meeting, and plan to keep an eye on future developments in Bedford. I was heartened to see that many other residents apparently plan to do the same.

A Moirs Pond Community meeting was held on April 3, with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to give an update on the environmental assessment process for the infill.

— Patricia L. Chalmers



SPECIAL ARTICLES

URSUS MARITIMUS HALAGONIENSIS

Some of our members may remember my brief report last year on my observations of the Haligonian subspecies of *Ursus maritimus*, so named for its annual migration to the waters of Black Rock Beach in Halifax's Point Pleasant Park.

I have a theory that the timing of this phenomenon may be related to the timing of the annual circumpolar migration of *Rangifer tarandus*, which is so eagerly anticipated by our younger members.

Your dutiful investigator has continued his research, and I am very sad to have to report that the subspecies seems in a serious decline.

A few days ago I made my way to Black Rock Beach at what I have learned to be the appropriate time, and where last year I saw at least two hundred specimens sporting about the beach, all age classes represented and in fine condition (particularly some of the females).

This year all I saw at first was two police cars.

I assumed the constabulary were present in the role of conservation officers, to protect the migrants from inadvertent interference from overly enthusiastic spectators. I watched for a while, and eventually two specimens approached the beach, older males this time but in good, stalwart condition.

However the police, rather than protecting them, seemed determined to prevent them from entering the water! They did not succeed in this. The agility of *Ursus maritimus* exceeded that of *Homo sapiens* on this occasion; indeed, a question was raised among other observers as to just how sapient these particular *Homo*s were, and it was suggested that a better nomination might be *Homo ebenezer*.

When the specimens emerged from the water, the police tagged them for future reference. I can only hope that this decline in *Ursus maritimus halagoniensis* can be reversed, and I'm sure our younger members will agree as I express concern lest the zealousness of *Homo ebenezer* expand in future to an attempt to interfere with the annual circumpolar migration of *Rangifer tarandus*.

– Michael Downing

TALKS



TRAILS

3 JANUARY

Michael Haynes is the author of several guides to hiking trails in Nova Scotia; the next, expected out in early summer, is the sixth he has written, and completes up-to-date coverage of the province. The new Hiking Trails of Nova Scotia will replace the previous hikers' guide and also contain many more trails.

Nova Scotia did not have many walking paths even ten years ago, but the public's increased interest in hiking, and the generosity of landowners, including forestry companies, have created a whole lot of new ones.

Michael Haynes has tried them all, and enjoyed the scenery and conditions of each. His books list degree of difficulty, scenic points, recommended modes of travel, and sometimes, what to wear. Swimming holes are common, and waterproof footwear is often necessary. Michael showed some slides of trails, discussed the Cross Canada Trail, and recalled some interesting experiences; one day he met a bobcat on a country lane, and saw it again when he returned the same way. He has a photograph of that too.

After he spoke, the conversation turned to specific places, including the Cross Canada Trail. We learned that parts of it are rough and hard to traverse, and that the McDonald Bridge is also part of the trail.

Also, that not all landowners and residents are willing to have this trail close to their homes.

Bob McDonald remains very concerned about the growing development of Mainland North Commons. Michael agreed with him that local councils are still concentrating too much on rinks, diamonds, pitches, and so on, but says Nova Scotia Trust is doing well in helping to preserve undeveloped land.

Michael's new book will be well indexed and list relevant webpages. It will cost \$8.00 or \$9.00.

– Ursula Grigg

MIDI



7 FEBRUARY

Jayne Roma is the organiser of the new Marine Invertebrate Diversity Initiative (MIDI), which has been discussed for several years but really began at a workshop held at Bedford Institute of Oceanography in January 2001. Derek Davies, the President, opened the workshop, and invited everyone to try making the drafts by which all the benthic invertebrates around the coasts of Nova Scotia were to be described. Pickled specimens were on the tables, eyed askance by some, and next to them, working computers.

Jayne has been responsible for the complex computer planning, which is set up by technicians at BIO, and she oversees the work, which she described. Each invertebrate species is identified and given a

'profile' – a description of size, colouration, characteristics and so forth – with a picture and a map of known occurrences. Published references to its habitat, habits, reproduction, food and so on are listed – it is a comprehensive summary of what is known. The profile is then reviewed by someone with scientific qualifications, edited (and added to), and the profile is available for surfing, and use as a source of information and for identification.

It is surprising how many organisations are behind this unusual database, which is free of commercial or taxonomic bias. The NS Museum of Natural History is its origin, and Ecology Action Centre, BIO, DFO and some outfits in the USA, are behind it. Funding is by knotted shoestrings, but will strengthen, and other groups are already asking to use MIDI's data (so far about 90 of some 3,000 species). The data is available to, and provided by, the same people – everyone from school kids to professionals; fishermen and school children are particularly welcome! So are people with scientific knowledge, who can help with verification.

It reminds me forcibly of Rudyard Kipling's *Just So* story, about King Suleiman-bin-Daoud, who planned to throw a feast for all the animals in the world. When the King had collected all the bags, crates and boxes in a mountainous pile on the wharf, an enormous animal rose from the deep sea, and ate it all in three mouthfuls; his name was Small Porges. He told the King he was the youngest of 30,000 brothers, and they had sent him to ask when dinner

would be served.

Well, even Small Porges must once have been a single cell.

MIDI will grow.

Have a look at <<http://www.fundyforum.com/MIDI>> and join in!

– Ursula Grigg

MEMBERS' SLIDES 7 MARCH

After the AGM, members settled back to enjoy some rural scenery. Three members brought slides.

Patricia Leader spent an autumn holiday touring the enormous sand dunes in Namibia, in southern Africa. The dunes take decades to creep across the arid landscape, and cannot be halted or turned aside; there are always dunes forming, maturing and blowing away. In spite of the dry conditions, there is a specialised flora and fauna, including lizards and scrubby trees.

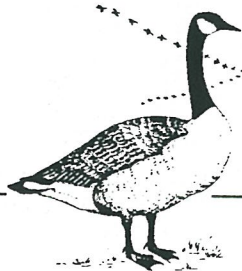
Joan Czapalay brought slides from Bon Portage island, where she has been helping to band birds. Bon Portage is famous for its seabirds, but Joan showed us the landscape, the historic buildings (including the lighthouse Evelyn Richardson immortalised), and the bird banding house as well.

Bob McDonald showed slides of Nova Scotia evocative of this beautiful province, and the things we all enjoy about it.



– Ursula Grigg

FIELD TRIPS



SEWER STROLL

DATE: Saturday, 19 January

PLACE: Various locations around Halifax Harbour

WEATHER: Clear, high of -1°C

INTERPRETERS: Peter and Linda Payzant

PARTICIPANTS: 43

Our annual sewer stroll started in a new location this year. Seeking to save a little time, we decided to omit Hartlen Point and instead began at the Fisherman's Wharf in Eastern Passage. We had a good introduction to Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls here, and we got several good species from the end of the wharf, including Black Guillemot (in their gray and white winter plumage), Red-breasted Mergansers, and Long-tailed Ducks, one of our prettiest winter species.

At the sewer outfall behind the old Woodside School we got our first Iceland and Black-headed Gulls. As well, we heard several landbirds including Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees. At Dartmouth Cove, alas, an unfeeling municipal government has moved the end of the sewer pipe

well out into the harbour, with the result that there is seldom much of interest there any more. However, Sullivan's Pond was much more rewarding. In the trees between Lake Banook and Hawthorne Street we found three Northern Cardinals, including an incandescent male. Several members of the group reported seeing a Gray Catbird at the same location. The pond itself had the usual huge numbers of American Black Ducks and Mallards, with various hybrids as well. We had good looks at a female American Wigeon and a Green-winged Teal here, and one or two people saw the American Coot. Just before we left, we got killer views of a Bohemian Waxwing, seen through a scope at close range.

Tufts Cove rewarded us with both American and Eurasian Wigeon, as well as a couple more Green-winged Teal. Moving around to the mouth of the Sackville River in Bedford, we had convincing looks at both Common Goldeneye and Barrow's Goldeneye. The field-marks were easy to distinguish in the telescope.

The Mill Cove sewage treatment plant was quiet, so we pushed on to the old Volvo wharf at the Richmond

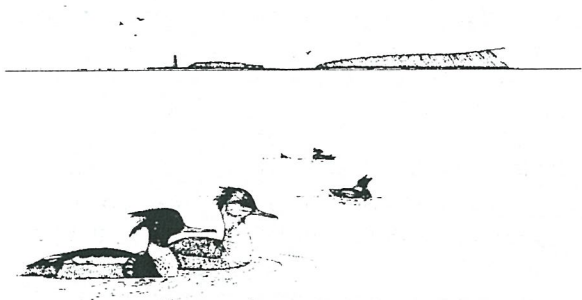
terminals in north end Halifax. Unfortunately, we didn't manage to locate the two specialties of this location, Mew Gull and Thayer's Gull, but we did have satisfying close looks at Black-headed, Iceland, and Ring-billed Gulls.

The highlight of the trip was probably the visit to Fleming Park, where we were taken to see the Brown Thrasher under his snow-covered bush in the woods. Although he didn't come out from cover, everybody saw parts of him as he foraged on the ground, apparently for food donated by a local birder.

We always hope for Harlequin Ducks at Tribune Head in Herring Cove, but this year it was not to be. Nevertheless, the scene was quite magical as the warm late-afternoon sun illuminated perhaps 600 Common Eiders, as well as a scattering of other species.

It was calm, quiet and picturesque, and I think that most felt quite happy with the day's trip.

– Peter Payzant



SEWER STROLL SPECIES

Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
American Black Duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>
American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Scaup sp.	<i>Aythya</i> sp.
Common Eide	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Barrow's Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala islandica</i>
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</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 glaucoideus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapilla</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Bohemian Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quisqualis</i>

ORIENTEERING

DATE: Saturday and Sunday, 2 and 3 February

PLACE: Point Pleasant Park

WEATHER: Sunny, windy, very cold and icy

INTERPRETERS: Etta Parker and Isobel Wainwright

PARTICIPANTS: ± 11°C

The morning of Saturday was sunny, but cold, windy and icy in the Park, so it was decided to cancel the event and try again next day. CBC would not air the cancellation, and the best we could do for Channel 9 was to leave a message!

Etta Parker and Isobel Wainwright had spent a cold week working on the flags and maps for the event, and both turned up on Saturday, as did one family who braved the course. It was very sunny on Sunday, and four people came from Hubbards to do the course along with me. Despite the snow under foot, we managed to get to many of the approximately 100 stations, some of which were missing or had been moved off course. People who turned out for the event enjoyed the taste of score orienteering.

We saw very few birds, but there were plenty of dogs in Point Pleasant Park.

Many thanks to the organisers, and Regina Maass and Lise Fillmore, for all their hard work in setting out the course.

– Patricia Leader

NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY TRIP

DATE: Sunday, 10 February

PLACE: NSMNH

INTERPRETER: Alex Wilson

WEATHER: Indoors!

PARTICIPANTS: 12



Twelve people were invited behind the scenes of the Museum by Alex Wilson, Manager of Collections and Curator of Botany. Our first stop was the Dr. Honeyman Room, where Alex welcomed us and gave us a history of the collections which spans over 250 years.

Prior to the foundation of the Museum, the Province's rich natural history had already been noticed by Moses Harris, a well-known naturalist who had accompanied General Edward Cornwallis from England when he arrived to garrison what is now Halifax. Harris found and documented butterflies on George's Island; this discovery in turn attracted artists and other naturalists to the area. Alex showed us Harris's 1750 engraving entitled 'A Plan of the Harbour of Chebucto and Town of Halifax', decorated with pictures of a long-horned beetle, two butterflies, and a porcupine.

A Mechanics' Institute was founded in the 1820s, with natural history as one of their topics for discussion. 40 years later, the Nova Scotia Institute of Science was founded, and one of their concerns was to promote the natural wealth of the Province commercially. Dr. Honeyman, a member of the

Institute, was keen to represent Nova Scotia overseas, and was given the opportunity when the World's Fair was held in Paris, France, in 1867. There the Nova Scotia collection was received so favourably that the Province was asked for even more exhibits. Subsequently those which were returned, with some new ones, became the nucleus of the present natural history collection.

The first Museum of Natural History was opened in 1868. Over time it has been housed in various buildings in Halifax; it moved to its present site in 1970.

The tour proceeded around the offices, laboratories, and storage areas. We noted that there were offices for two other Curators, one for Geology and one for Zoology. Besides the paid staff, the Museum relies on volunteers and research associates. Many, like John Gilhen, had worked in the Museum previously. John was in the laboratory that afternoon, and introduced us to three young Wood Turtles (*Clemmys insculpta*) and explained his research.

As we continued on the tour, we heard about the Thousand Eyes programme based on the work of Alexander MacKay, an early Superintendent of Nova Scotia schools, who was interested in phenology. In today's programme, school children collect records of a variety of plants, animals etc., and their time lines – when they appear in spring, bloom, or sing, and so on.

The Museum's web site, <<http://museum.gov.ns.ca>> is an excellent source of information. The latest intention is to establish, with federal funding, a 'virtual museum' of Canada. This will include six areas related to the Province's coastline, for example, the wealth of deep water corals; and the serious effects of litter.

Like many other institutions, the Museum has had to develop various sources of income. One of these is the slide collection, which can be used by the media, or anyone else needing a picture of a

particular organism. There are some 30,000 slides, filed by names, topics and locations. It is especially rich in plant images, and includes many of Mary Primrose's beautiful plant photographs.

We passed the isolation area where specimens are received and processed. Nearby were the large inter-vertebral disc and the baleen of a Northern Right Whale. The rest of the skeleton can be seen in an enclosure on the Mount Uniacke Estate, where it is being prepared over time 'au naturel'.

Alex then showed us mounted collections of Thread-leaved Sundew (*Drosera filiformis*), and told us how it was discovered – Nova Scotia being the only place in Canada where this plant occurs. This led to a discussion on whether Nova Scotia should protect a species like the Thread-leaved Sundew, which is endangered here, but abundant in the United States. Participants agreed with Alex that it should be protected; we should leave Nova Scotia with the same number of species as were found here before.

Some time was spent looking into the vast array of cabinets which house collections of beetles (including the infamous inhabitant of Point Pleasant Park), butterflies, fossils, rocks, shells, birds and their eggs, dragonflies, spiders, and much, much more. In the same area, Alex talked about income generators related to art work and scientific illustration. He then presented the group with a handsome poster of Nova Scotia's unique coastal plain wildflowers.

Many thanks to Alex Wilson and all the staff and volunteers at the Natural History Museum for identifying and guarding our natural heritage. Given the Province's current financial restraints, the Museum staff are doing an excellent job. Members of the Halifax Field Naturalists and like-minded individuals must continue their support of this veritable storehouse of our natural history. Such support not only includes educating oneself, but also adding to the pool of knowledge, plus, where applicable, lobbying the various levels of government on the Museum's behalf.

– Patricia Leader,
with input from Carole Blackmore

OUT AND ABOUT



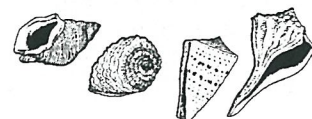
FNSN 2002 AGM

All sessions and events of this year's FNSN AGM will be held in the Multi-Purpose Room, Rosaria Centre, Mount Saint Vincent University, overlooking beautiful Bedford Basin.

Only \$55.00 (\$60.00 postmarked after 10 May) covers all talks and field trips, a reception on Friday, breakfast on Sunday, and all refreshment breaks. All other meals, including the Saturday evening banquet, are optional but must be pre-ordered and paid in advance with your registration. Accommodation can be had on campus or at any of several nearby motels.

There will be a wide array of interesting talks and wonderful field trips presented, and led, by experienced and knowledgeable scientists and naturalists.

Early registration is helpful to the organisers; please try to register early! All registrations received by 24 May will be acknowledged, and a map showing directions to the MSVU campus will be mailed out. As well, registrants may request acknowledgement by email.



This will save on postage, so please use it if you can.

For more detailed information, see the FNSN AGM registration form and programme included in this one hundred and sixth issue of the Halifax Field Naturalist.

Or, contact Joan Czapalay, FNSN President and 2002 AGM Conference Chair, 422-6858; email, <joancz@ns.sympatico.ca>; or go to <www.chebucto.ca/Environment/FNSN/agm2002>.

– Stephanie Robertson



LEATHERBACK TURTLE WASHED ASHORE

Randy Lauff, at St. Francis Xavier University, went to Pomquet Beach near Antigonish, where a sea turtle had washed up. A local resident guided him and a colleague directly to the turtle, a Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

It was perhaps 15 m off shore, but they had brought waders, and managed to secure a line to it. The turtle's front limbs were well entangled with rope. The animal had already undergone a lot of decay, but looked as if it was still complete. Upon closer inspection though, some finger/toe bones were missing, and the facial region smashed, perhaps by ice? Samples for DNA and toxicology were taken, but most of the turtle was left for the eagles.

The Sea Turtle Working Group, which monitors strandings, had already been informed.

It is now known that the seas off Nova Scotia are a normal part of the Leatherbacks' summer range; their ocean voyages are almost worldwide.

There are some rather unappealing photographs of this turtle at <<http://www.stfx.ca/people/rlauff/leatherback/leatherback.html>>.

– from a letter by Randy Lauff

GOOD NEWS

It's been a long time (01/08/02) since word was sent from the calving ground of the Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*).

The season is past half over and there are 15 or more right whale calves at their mother's sides all along the coast from Cape Hat to Cape Cap, up high on the shelf, most within 10 fathoms. Some are still hanging around where they always do, between Savannah and St. Augustine, with a strong presence off American Beach, Fla. They are taking solace and shelter in the shallows, basking and nursing on the nice days, holding their own, subsurface, on the nasty ones.

We've counted a dozen calves from photos in the EWS area at the head of the Georgia Bight. Another three we didn't catch are compliments of survey leaders Emily Argo, flying offshore and to the north (Wildlife

Trust); Alicia Windham-Reid, to the south (FMRI); and Bill McClellan, flying along the coast of NC and SC, (UNCW). All babies look healthy and strong... and 15 is 3 more than the average dozen per year!

We'll take it.

– Laurie Murison, Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station; from a note to Nature NB

WOOD TURTLES IN CAPE BRETON?



On Monday March 11, on CBC Radio's Maritime Noon, James Bridgeland, Ecologist in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, was interviewed about the possibility that there is a self-supporting population of Wood Turtles (*Clemmys insculpta*) in the lowlands of the Aspy Valley, on the edge of the highlands in northern Cape Breton, where there have been sightings and tracks and at least one record of a nest of eggs.

He said that Wood Turtles are primarily river turtles, but also are the most terrestrial of our freshwater turtles, and that they frequently wander on land in search of berries/fruits (and he should have also added invertebrates like earthworms). He also mentioned that Wood Turtles are frequently kept as pets and later released, sometimes at great distances from where they were originally found. Thus the Cape Breton animals might be suspected of really being at least partly of transplanted origins.

A new study is being started to investigate the genetics of any Wood Turtles which are found there, with blood samples to be compared (at Acadia Univ.?) for DNA with similar samples from turtles of other parts of Nova Scotia. Perhaps a new subspecies of Wood Turtles might be discovered. Also, any captured turtles will have transmitters put on them, so that their movements can be tracked.

Wood Turtles are considered to be a Species At Risk in Nova Scotia, in the 'less-than-Endangered yellow' category, which is something like 'likely to become Endangered if their habitat deteriorates in any way'.

– Jim Wolford

FORESTRY AGAIN



At its last meeting (Sunday, March 23), the board of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists discussed the membership of FNSN in the Northern Forest Alliance (NFA). The purpose of NFA, now in its third year of operation, is to develop the Nova Scotia Model Forest.

The Ecology Action Centre, the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators Association, and the Forest Caucus of the Nova Scotia Environmental Network, have pulled out of the alliance. They claim that the management committee of NFA is responsive only to corporate and government interests and is not meeting the mandate of the model forest concept, which involves experimental forestry practices, maintaining biodiversity, and enhancing social interaction through input from all stakeholder groups.

Are we surprised?



– Stephanie Robertson
from an email from Doug Linzey
Secretary, 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.

The latter [i.e. granite] prevails to a great extent along the coast, forming broken and inaccessible cliffs. Above, broad fields of coarse quartz sandstone, or of granite, are either bare or covered with a sparse vegetation, consisting of mosses, lichens, and small shrubs. The visitor turns from the cold skeleton of the scene to find relief of some sort in these, and their beauty repays examination. Large patches of mayflower occur, monopolising the open lands like our ling. This pretty little flower (*Epigaea repens*, Ericaceae) is, indeed, so common, that it has been assumed as the emblem of the colony, with the motto - "We bloom amid the snow."

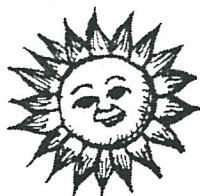
– George Rowe, "Nova Scotia" in The Colonial Empire of Great Britain (1864)

NATURAL EVENTS

- 20 Mar. Vernal Equinox is at 15:16 AST. Spring begins in the Northern hemisphere.
- 23 Mar. The daily average temperature is above 0°.
- 28 Mar. Full Moon – the 'Worm Moon'.
- 7 Apr. Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 a.m. Turn clocks ahead one hour.
- 7-30 Apr. The best evening apparition of Mercury this year.
- 16 Apr. The daily minimum temperature at Shearwater is above 0°.
- 18 Apr.-18 May All five 'naked-eye' planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) are grouped in the western evening sky.
- 22 Apr. Earth Day.
- 27 Apr. Full Moon – the 'Pine Moon'.
- 4 May Saturn is in conjunction with Mars.
- 6 May Venus is in a close grouping with Saturn, (the brightest), and Mars.
- 7 May Saturn is in conjunction with Venus.
- 10 May Venus is in conjunction with Mars.
- 14 May The crescent Moon enters the scene, causing an occultation.
- 26 May Full Moon – the 'Flower Moon'.
- 28 May The date of last spring frost in Halifax (Env. Can. says there is a 1:10 chance that a spring frost will occur after this date); look forward to 155 frost-free days.
- 3 June Jupiter is in conjunction with Venus.
- 12-18 June The earliest mornings of the year. Sun rises at 05:28 ADT.
- 21 June Summer Solstice at 10:22 ADT. Summer begins in the Northern Hemisphere; the longest day of the year, with 15 hours and 34 minutes of daylight at Halifax.
- 22-30 June The latest evenings of the year. Sun sets at 21:04 ADT.
- 24 June Full Moon – the 'Strawberry Moon'.

– Sources: Atmospheric Environment Service, Climate Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.; Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's Observer's Handbook 2002; and the personal observations of the compiler.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER SATURDAYS



2 March	6:50	18:03	6 April	5:46	18:48
9 March	6:38	18:12	13 April	6:34	19:57
16 March	6:25	18:22	20 April	6:22	20:05
23 March	6:12	18:30	27 April	6:11	20:14
30 March	5:59	18:39			
4 May	6:00	20:23	1 June	5:32	20:53
11 May	5:51	20:31	8 June	5:29	20:58
18 May	5:43	20:39	15 June	5:28	21:02
25 May	5:37	20:46	22 June	5:29	21:04
			29 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 at 7:30 p.m. on the 3rd Monday of the month, Room 241, Beveridge Arts Centre, Acadia University. Field trips usually depart from the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front St., Wolfville. For more info – go to <http://www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/home.htm>.

- 15 April TBA
- 28 April "Pond-hopping for Ducks and other birds", with leader Jim Wolford, 542-7650.
- 20 May "Wolverines, Woolly Louseworts, and Caribou: A Trip to Bathurst Inlet, Nunavut", with speakers Martine Dufresne and Anne Mills.

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 Mar. 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 – 496-8257; or go to <<http://apwww.stmarys.ca/bgo/>>.

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

Nova Scotia Bird Society: Meets at 7:30 p.m. on the 4th Thursday of the month, Sept. to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. For more info – Peter Richard, 463-5612; or go to <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc/>>.

- 28 March** "Humboldt penguins: diving behaviour and male nest intruders", with Sabrin a Taylor, Coordinator, Herpetofaunal Atlas of Nova Scotia.
 - 30 March** "Baccaro and Blanche Peninsula", with Donna Ensor, 875-4269.
 - 13 April** "Martinique Beach", with leader Ian McLaren, 429-7024.
 - 25 April** TBA
 - 4 May** "Cape Sable Island", with leader Murray Newell, 745-3340.
 - 4 May** "Spring Meeting in Amherst", with speaker Kate Bredin, Atlantic Canada Conservation Data biologist.
 - 5 May** "Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary", with leader Al Smith, (506) 536-0164
 - 11 May** "North American Migration Count", Judy Tufts, 542-7800; or email: tandove@ns.sympatico.ca to take part.
 - 15 May** "Halifax Country Early Morning Warbler Walk", with leader Fred Dobson, 852-3042; email <aseas@hfx.eastlink.ca>. **Pre-registration is necessary!**
 - 17-20 May** "Bon Portage Island", with leader Claire Diggins, 825-6152. **Pre-registration is necessary!**
 - 18 May** "Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary", with leader Terry Paquet, 452-3622; email: terrypaquet@hotmail.com.
 - 23 May** "Fall in Veracruz – a Mex-Eco Adventure", with speaker Richard Stern.
 - 25 May** "Annapolis Royal/Belleisle", with leader Sharon Hawboldt, 902-665-4105; email: s.hawboldt@ns.sympatico.ca.
 - 26 May** "Shubenacadie Area", with leader Roslyn McPhee, (902) 758-3265.
 - 8 June** "Canso and Area", with leaders Steve Bushell & Randy Lauff, 902-867-2471; email: rlauff@stfx.ca.
- Rain date – 9 June.**



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

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

- April** "Annual Salamander Meander", on a suitable wet night. **Pre-register at 424-7353 starting March 19th.**
- 10 April** "Grand Gardens of Eastern America", with Botany Curator, Alex Wilson.
- 13-14 April** "Orchid Show and Sale", hosted by the Orchid Society of Nova Scotia.
- 17 April** "Rocks & Minerals of the Maritimes", with DNR geologist Howard Donohoe.

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society: Meets at 7:30 p.m., on the 4th Monday of the month, Sept. to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. For more info – Keith Vaughan, 445-9887, or go to <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/~nswfs/>>.

- 25 March** "Alpine Flora of Italy", with speakers Mary and Chris Helleiner.
- 22 April** AGM, followed by "Macro Photography of Floral Subjects", with Teunis Obdam, Photo Guild of Nova Scotia.
- 18-20? May** "Blomidon Park Walk", with leader Barry Sawyer, 445-4938.
- 27 May** Outdoor Program – "An evening walk through a variety of habitats in Long Lake Provincial Park".
- 1 June** "Sackville River Trail", with leader Barry Sawyer, 445-4938.
- 24 June** Outdoor Program – "An evening walk at Uniacke Estate Park", with leader Keith Vaughan, 445-9887.

Nova Scotian Institute of Science: Meets at 7:30 p.m., on the 1st Monday of the month, usually at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. For more info – go to <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Science/NSIS/Home.html>>.

- 1 April** "Alien Invasions off Our Coast", with speaker Robert Scheibling.

Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia: Meets at 7:30 p.m., on the 2nd Mon. of the month, as well as the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. Shows are held at Saint Mary's University, Theatre A, Burke Education Centre. For more info – Kenneth Moore, 826-1121; or go to <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/PGNS/>>.

- 27 April** "Spring Show".
- 28-30 June** "CAPA Camera Canada College 2002: Halifax". Field trips, seminars, banquet, competitions, etc.

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax Chapter): Meets at 8:00 p.m., on the 3rd Friday of each month at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. For more info – go to <<http://halifax.rasc.ca>>.

HALIFAX TIDE TABLE

TABLE DES MARÉES

2002

HALIFAX HNA Z+4

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	0510	0.3	0.1	16	0420	1.0	0.3	1	0540	0.7	0.2	16	0450	0.7	0.2	1	0655	1.0	0.3	16	0625	0.7	0.2
	1045	5.9	1.8		1025	5.2	1.6		1115	5.6	1.7		1045	5.2	1.6		1235	4.9	1.5		1210	5.6	1.7
MO	1730	1.3	0.4	TU	1620	1.6	0.5	WE	1805	2.0	0.6	TH	1705	2.0	0.6	SA	1935	2.0	0.6	SU	1905	1.6	0.5
LU	2300	6.2	1.9	MA	2225	5.6	1.7	ME	2320	5.6	1.7	JE	2245	5.6	1.7	SA				DI			
2	0605	0.7	0.2	17	0505	1.0	0.3	2	0635	1.0	0.3	17	0545	1.0	0.3	2	0040	4.9	1.5	17	0015	5.2	1.6
	1135	5.6	1.7		1100	5.2	1.6		1205	5.2	1.6		1130	5.2	1.6		0745	1.3	0.4		0725	0.7	0.2
TU	1830	1.6	0.5	WE	1710	2.0	0.6	TH	1910	2.0	0.6	FR	1810	2.0	0.6	SU	1330	4.9	1.5	MO	1305	5.6	1.7
MA	2345	5.9	1.8	ME	2305	5.6	1.7	JE				VE	2335	5.6	1.7	DI	2025	2.0	0.6	LU	2005	1.3	0.4
3	0705	1.0	0.3	18	0555	1.3	0.4	3	0010	5.2	1.6	18	0645	1.0	0.3	3	0135	4.6	1.4	18	0115	5.2	1.6
	1225	5.2	1.6		1145	4.9	1.5		0730	1.3	0.4		1220	5.2	1.6		0830	1.3	0.4		0820	0.7	0.2
WE	1930	2.0	0.6	TH	1810	2.3	0.7	FR	1300	4.9	1.5	SA	1915	2.0	0.6	MO	1430	4.9	1.5	TU	1405	5.6	1.7
ME				JE	2345	5.2	1.6	VE	2010	2.3	0.7	SA				LU	2120	2.0	0.6	MA	2105	1.3	0.4
4	0035	5.2	1.6	19	0655	1.3	0.4	4	0105	4.9	1.5	19	0025	5.2	1.6	4	0240	4.6	1.4	19	0225	4.9	1.5
	0805	1.3	0.4		1230	4.9	1.5		0825	1.3	0.4		0740	1.0	0.3		0915	1.6	0.5		0915	1.0	0.3
TH	1320	4.9	1.5	FR	1920	2.3	0.7	SA	1405	4.6	1.4	SU	1320	5.2	1.6	TU	1530	4.9	1.5	WE	1505	5.6	1.7
JE	2035	2.3	0.7	VE				SA	2105	2.3	0.7	DI	2020	2.0	0.6	MA	2205	2.0	0.6	ME	2205	1.0	0.3
5	0130	4.9	1.5	20	0040	5.2	1.6	5	0210	4.6	1.4	20	0125	4.9	1.5	5	0350	4.6	1.4	20	0335	4.9	1.5
	0900	1.3	0.4		0800	1.3	0.4		0920	1.3	0.4		0840	1.0	0.3		1000	1.6	0.5		1010	1.0	0.3
FR	1435	4.6	1.4	SA	1335	4.9	1.5	SU	1520	4.6	1.4	MO	1430	5.2	1.6	WE	1620	4.9	1.5	TH	1605	5.9	1.8
VE	2135	2.3	0.7	SA	2030	2.3	0.7	DI	2200	2.0	0.6	LU	2120	1.6	0.5	ME	2255	1.6	0.5	JE	2300	0.7	0.2
6	0245	4.9	1.5	21	0140	4.9	1.5	6	0325	4.6	1.4	21	0240	4.9	1.5	6	0450	4.6	1.4	21	0445	4.9	1.5
	1000	1.3	0.4		0900	1.3	0.4		1010	1.6	0.5		0935	0.7	0.2		1050	1.6	0.5		1110	1.0	0.3
SA	1605	4.6	1.4	SU	1450	4.9	1.5	MO	1625	4.9	1.5	TU	1535	5.6	1.7	TH	1705	5.2	1.6	FR	1705	5.9	1.8
SA	2235	2.3	0.7	DI	2135	2.0	0.6	LU	2255	2.0	0.6	MA	2220	1.3	0.4	JE	2340	1.3	0.4	VE			
7	0405	4.9	1.5	22	0255	4.9	1.5	7	0435	4.6	1.4	22	0355	5.2	1.6	7	0540	4.6	1.4	22	0000	0.3	0.1
	1055	1.3	0.4		1000	1.0	0.3		1100	1.6	0.5		1030	0.7	0.2		1135	1.6	0.5		0545	5.2	1.6
SU	1710	4.9	1.5	MO	1605	5.2	1.6	TU	1715	4.9	1.5	WE	1640	5.9	1.8	FR	1745	5.2	1.6	SA	1210	1.0	0.3
DI	2330	2.0	0.6	LU	2235	1.6	0.5	MA	2340	1.6	0.5	ME	2320	0.7	0.2	VE				SA	1755	5.9	1.8
8	0515	4.9	1.5	23	0415	5.2	1.6	8	0530	4.9	1.5	23	0505	5.2	1.6	8	0020	1.0	0.3	23	0055	0.3	0.1
	1145	1.3	0.4		1100	0.7	0.2		1145	1.6	0.5		1130	0.7	0.2		0620	4.9	1.5		0640	5.2	1.6
MO	1755	5.2	1.6	TU	1705	5.6	1.7	WE	1755	5.2	1.6	TH	1730	6.2	1.9	SA	1220	1.6	0.5	SU	1310	1.3	0.4
LU				MA	2335	1.0	0.3	ME				JE			SA	1825	5.6	1.7	DI	1845	5.9	1.8	
9	0020	2.0	0.6	24	0525	5.6	1.7	9	0020	1.3	0.4	24	0015	0.3	0.1	9	0100	1.0	0.3	24	0145	0.0	0.0
	0605	5.2	1.6		1155	0.7	0.2		0615	4.9	1.5		0600	5.6	1.7		0705	4.9	1.5		0730	5.6	1.7
TU	1230	1.3	0.4	WE	1800	6.2	1.9	TH	1225	1.3	0.4	FR	1230	0.7	0.2	SU	1305	1.6	0.5	MO	1400	1.3	0.4
MA	1835	5.2	1.6	ME				JE	1830	5.6	1.7	VE	1820	6.2	1.9	DI	1900	5.6	1.7	LU	1935	5.9	1.8
10	0100	1.6	0.5	25	0035	0.7	0.2	10	0100	1.3	0.4	25	0110	0.0	0.0	10	0145	0.7	0.2	25	0230	0.0	0.0
	0645	5.2	1.6		0620	5.9	1.8		0655	5.2	1.6		0655	5.6	1.7		0745	5.2	1.6		0820	5.6	1.7
WE	1310	1.3	0.4	TH	1250	0.3	0.1	FR	1305	1.3	0.4	SA	1325	0.7	0.2	MO	1345	1.6	0.5	TU	1450	1.3	0.4
ME	1910	5.6	1.7	JE	1850	6.6	2.0	VE	1905	5.6	1.7	SA	1910	6.6	2.0	LU	1940	5.6	1.7	MA	2020	5.9	1.8
11	0135	1.3	0.4	26	0125	0.3	0.1	11	0135	1.0	0.3	26	0200	0.0	0.0	11	0225	0.3	0.1	26	0315	0.3	0.1
	0725	5.2	1.6		0715	6.2	1.9		0735	5.2	1.6		0745	5.9	1.8		0825	5.2	1.6		0910	5.6	1.7
TH	1340	1.3	0.4	FR	1340	0.3	0.1	SA	1340	1.3	0.4	SU	1415	1.0	0.3	TU	1430	1.6	0.5	WE	1535	1.6	0.5
JE	1945	5.6	1.7	VE	1935	6.6	2.0	SA	1940	5.6	1.7	DI	1955	6.2	1.9	MA	2020	5.9	1.8	ME	2110	5.9	1.8
12	0205	1.3	0.4	27	0215	0.0	0.0	12	0210	0.7	0.2	27	0250	0.0	0.0	12	0305	0.3	0.1	27	0400	0.3	0.1
	0800	5.6	1.7		0805	6.2	1.9		0810	5.2	1.6		0835	5.9	1.8		0910	5.2	1.6		0955	5.6	1.7
FR	1410	1.3	0.4	SA	1430	0.3	0.1	SU	1415	1.3	0.4	MO	1505	1.0	0.3	WE	1515	1.6	0.5	TH	1620	1.6	0.5
VE	2015	5.9	1.8	SA	2020	6.6	2.0	DI	2010	5.9	1.8	LU	2040	6.2	1.9	ME	2105	5.9	1.8	JE	2155	5.6	1.7
13	0235	1.0	0.3	28	0305	0.0	0.0	13	0245	0.7	0.2	28	0335	0.0	0.0	13	0350	0.3	0.1	28	0440	0.7	0.2
	0840	5.6	1.7		0855	6.2	1.9		0850	5.2	1.6		0925	5.6	1.7		0950	5.6	1.7		1040	5.2	1.6
SA	1440	1.3	0.4	SU	1520	0.7	0.2	MO	1450	1.6	0.5	TU	1555	1.3	0.4	TH	1605	1.6	0.5	FR	1710	2.0	0.6
SA	2045	5.9	1.8	DI	2105	6.6	2.0	LU	2045	5.9	1.8	MA	2125	5.9	1.8	JE	2150	5.9	1.8	VE	2240	5.6	1.7
14	0310	1.0	0.3	29	0355	0.0	0.0	14	0325	0.7	0.2	29	0420	0.3	0.1	14	0440	0.3	0.1	29	0525	1.0	0.3
	0915	5.6	1.7		0940	5.9	1.8		0925	5.2	1.6		1010	5.6	1.7		1035	5.6	1.7		1120	5.2	1.6
SU	1510	1.3	0.4	MO	1615	1.0	0.3	TU	1525	1.6	0.5	WE	1645	1.6	0.5	FR	1700	1.6	0.5	SA	1800	2.0	0.6
DI	2120	5.9	1.8	LU	2150	6.2	1.9	MA	2125	5.9	1.8	ME	2215	5.9	1.8	VE	2235	5.6	1.7	SA	2325	5.2	1.6

NATURE NOTES

Reported at 3 January Meeting

Peter Payzant began the several reports about Waxwings, mostly Bohemian but also Cedar.

A snowy owl was seen in Point Pleasant Park; there have been two on Devil's Island.

A large number of summer birds and vagrants are around; the winter list for Nova Scotia is at 186 species already; total was only 192 all last winter.

Several shrubs and trees have swelling buds and some lilacs are showing leaves.

Michael Downing reported *Ursus maritimus* down in numbers in Halifax (see p.7)

Reported at 7 February Meeting

Bob McDonald saw Bohemian Waxwings.

Peter Payzant mentioned White-tailed Deer; buck, doe and spike-horn eating Canada Yew, and wondered if it is poisonous. Pat Chalmers confirmed the grazing habit and named the plant - *Taxus canadensis*. It isn't poisonous to cattle or deer.

Joan Czapalay was surprised to see a rat eating under her bird feeder.

A Northern Flicker on Oxford St. chased some starlings off a feeder.

Keith Vaughan noticed sea-smoke on the harbour on Thursday morning.

Regina Maass saw a Robin beside the North-west Arm.

Reported at 7 March Meeting

Everyone had seen signs of spring; birds which over-wintered here were singing, and a few migrants were arriving and starting to call. Bald eagles on Gaspereau Lake have been feeding on a deer, a coyote kill.

Shirley McIntyre has been seeing a harbour seal lying out on the new small wharf on Bedford Basin (behind Sobey's). Suzanne Borkowski has heather in bloom and has seen Japanese Quince; her Wilson's warbler, Willy, is in fine feather, having been supported lavishly with mealworms through the cold weather.

Lesley Butters saw a city pigeon carrying sticks. There are still wildfowl, including Eurasian Widgeon, on Sullivan's Pond, but the too-tidy city is clearing away the brush which shelters song-birds.

Pat Chalmers and Jean Hartley went to Hartlen Point and saw the Snowy Owl still there; a couple of Ravens alit near it and took turns approaching it, just as if they were daring each other to touch it. The watchers were amused, the owl just watched. Pat says that Devil's Island has enough rats to support the Snowy Owl and a couple of hawks; Rough-legged Hawks are sometimes seen there. Pat first heard a White-throated Sparrow trying its song out on March 7th; Song Sparrows had been singing earlier, and House Finches were singing from the pines above the Killam Library on March 4th. Pussy Willows were blooming in Herring Cove, and oriental Witch Hazel was out at the end of Marlborough Street. Pat saw the first cloud of dancing flies on March 4th, as well. Ursula heard a White-throated Sparrow singing on February 28th, on St. Mary's campus.

The New England Journal of Medicine has warned that bird watching can be dangerous to one's health. A birder in the Everglades failed to see an alligator until it was too late...

! NEXT DEADLINE !

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contributions to the Editor, HFN

c/o NS Museum of Natural History

Please phone 455-8160 to alert the Editor