

# THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST



No. 131  
June to August, 2008



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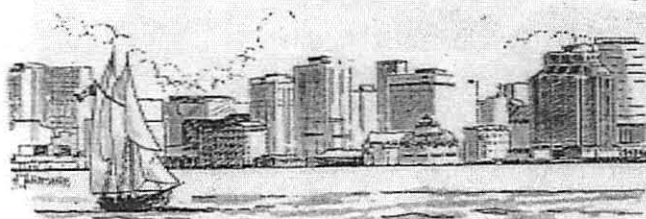
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Return address: HFN, c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, NS, B3H 3A6

# HFN

is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and holds Registered Charity status with Canada

Revenue Agency. Tax-creditable receipts will be issued for individual and corporate gifts. **HFN** is an affiliate of Nature Canada and an organisational member of Nature NS (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 the public at large, and 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; they are open to the public. **Field Trips** are held at least once a month; it is appreciated if those travelling in someone else's car share the cost of the gas. **Participants** in HFN activities are responsible for their own safety. Everyone, member or not, is welcome to take part in field trips. **Memberships** are open to anyone interested in the natural history of Nova Scotia. Forms are available at any meeting of the society, or by writing to: Membership Secretary, Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History. Members receive the quarterly **HFN Newsletter** and **HFN Programme**, and new memberships received from September 1st to December 31st of any year are valid until the end of the following membership year. The regular membership year is from January 1st to December 31st.



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### GRAPHICS

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### FEES 2008/2009

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

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# HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## EDITORIAL

Summer is a very busy time for everyone, which is reflected in the length of this issue. The Point Pleasant Park talk and walk will be included in the subsequent newsletter, and we are still awaiting a write-up for our favourite annual trip to Cape Split. Have a wonderful July and August!

— Stephanie Robertson



## POINT PLEASANT PARK

The final, comprehensive plan for Point Pleasant Park was publicly presented at the Meinertzhagen Auditorium of the Halifax Grammar School, (in the former Tower Road School building), from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., June 25th, to an audience of about 60 people. Peter Bigelow, Manager of Real Property Planning for HRM, outlined the background leading to creation of the plan, including the cutting of roughly 2,500 trees by the CFIA in 2001 in response to a perceived problem with an 'infestation' of the BSLB, the loss of some 10,000 trees from an ice storm early in 2003, and Hurricane Juan's destruction of an estimated 75,000 trees. After Peter's overview, various members of the consulting team discussed elements of the plan – mainly the forest and its preservation, the shoreline and its protection, and how to protect the forts and other cultural assets in the park.

The comprehensive plan was very well-received by those who attended the meeting. The guiding principles for the forests included balancing landscape ecology with human use in the context of encouraging development of a sustainable mixed-age Acadian forest containing a diversity of native tree species. The emphasis is to be on long-lived, hardy, shade-tolerant varieties like sugar maple, yellow birch, red oak, eastern hemlock, white pine and red spruce, although many other species will be encouraged. Wherever possible, natural regeneration is the favoured means of renewing the forest, augmented with planting only where this is not successful. The target is to increase the forest area, and the Comprehensive Plan makes it very clear that Point Pleasant Park is a forest park, not a park of lawns, sports fields and large buildings.

Guiding principles for the shoreline include an acceptance that erosion is inevitable and should be expected and planned for if other objectives do not demand stabilization, and that stabilization should only be undertaken if archaeological features are seriously threatened by erosion. Because of the inevitability of eventual erosion, archaeological work along the shoreline should be carried out as soon as possible. Where cultural features are seriously compromised by erosion and pose a safety hazard to the public, they should be removed or entombed after all cultural assets have been recorded.

The forts and other cultural assets in the park are planned for if other objectives do not demand stabilization, and that stabilization should only be undertaken if archaeological features are seriously threatened by erosion. Because of the inevitability of eventual erosion, archaeological work along the shoreline should be carried out as soon as possible. Where cultural features are seriously compromised by erosion and pose a safety hazard to the public, they should be removed or entombed after all cultural assets have been recorded.

The forts and other cultural assets in the park are

cultural assets. The essential components of this policy include maintaining an inventory of resources, evaluating resources, understanding the historic significance of sites, giving consideration to historic value in conservation and preservation, and monitoring to ensure that conservation and preservation objectives are met.

In summary, the report's recommendations were true to both the letter and the spirit of the above principles. Perhaps more important, the recommendations were true to the feedback submitted by HFN members and others during the design process. In short, we said we wanted our park back, and it looks like we'll get it back – but in an improved version. For those who want to see the actual recommendations, go to [www.pointpleasantpark.ca](http://www.pointpleasantpark.ca), and follow the link to the comprehensive plan. Both an executive summary and the full plan are there for your perusal.

— Allan Robertson



## BLUE MOUNTAIN/BIRCH COVE

In October 2007, the Province announced its plans to designate the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes area under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

Before a candidate area is officially designated, the Act requires a period of public consultation to ensure groups and individuals can comment on the decision. A socio-economic analysis of the designation's effects is also required and it is currently in progress.

A summary of submitted public comments, and the socio-economic report, will be released later this summer. The goal is to complete the consultation and designate the area by fall 2008.

Help us meet this goal by taking part in the following public open houses:

**Wednesday July 2, 2008** at the Keshen Goodman Public Library in Halifax from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Monday July 7, 2008** from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the St. Margaret's Centre in Upper Tantallon.

Submit comments in person at an open house; request a meeting for your group or organisation; contact (ph 424-3600, fax 424-0503); write (N.S. Environment, P.O. Box 442, 5151 Terminal Rd., Halifax, N.S., B3J 2P8; or email ([protectedareas@gov.ns.ca](mailto:protectedareas@gov.ns.ca)) the Protected Areas Branch of Nova Scotia Environment.

Please comment by August 22, 2008 to ensure your views are considered.



## NEW AND RETURNING

John and Anita Carpenter  
of Nova Scotia Environment.

Please comment by August 22, 2008 to ensure your views are considered.



## NEW AND RETURNING

# SPECIAL REPORTS

## VOLUNTARY PLANNING & N.S. NATURAL RESOURCES

Roughly 195 people (filling two separate rooms) attended the Halifax public meeting on the future of natural resources in Nova Scotia. Reporters and camera crews focused on the young and the old; for instance – a group of Grade 1 and Grade 2 students who spoke about the importance of habitat for animals and protection of seashores, – and Wilfred Creighton, 104, who noted that “successive provincial governments have shown little appreciation for the value of our forests.” Mr. Creighton was the provincial forester from 1934 to 1949, after which he became Deputy Minister of the Department of Lands and Forests.

Following are some highlights which I thought most important (at least in the room where I was):

- a representative of Trout Nova Scotia spoke on the detrimental impacts of clearcutting on trout and salmon;
- a student from the UNB forestry program spoke to the importance of encouraging long-lived, shade-tolerant tree species when managing forests;
- a member of the NS Bird Society spoke about the habitat loss for birds when forests are clearcut;
- an Ecology Action Centre representative spoke to the need for DNR to provide a forum for people to discuss these issues in detail;
- a tourism industry participant spoke about the negative affects of clearcutting on tourism;
- input from the Genuine Product Index (GPI) Youth Group, one of whom spoke to the need to truly listen to each other and to learn from each other; and,
- GPI Atlantic’s Ron Coleman, who asked DNR to provide an opportunity to vet the indicators presented in the

latest GPI report on forestry. “Let’s take a good look at the evidence — let’s look at each indicator, and decide whether our report is right or wrong on these indicators.”

Quotes from forestry industry reps included:

– “Letting nature run its course is a risky business. If we really care about healthy forest ecosystems, we need to do active management.”

– “Every year we run tours for teachers, and every teacher that goes through this comes out with their eyes opened.”

– “Clearcutting is a good forest practice and those who think otherwise need to be educated.”

– “Old forests are no good for wildlife, and are a place for forest fires. Old forests aren’t good for watersheds. If we only had old forest, we wouldn’t have any water.”

– “Protected areas are dangerous because they lead to forest fires.”

From a DNR staff person;

– “There’s a tremendous lack of information and knowledge across this province; every citizen should be offered the chance to learn, and DNR has lots of good information.”

And, from the Forest Products Association of N.S.;

– “We need areas protected for intensive forestry to take place.”

Log on to have your say at <https://vp.gov.ns.ca/projects/resources/getinvolved>.

– Jamie Simpson  
Standing Tall Campaign  
Ecology Action Centre

## HFN TALKS

### BIRDS OF ETHIOPIA

1 MAY

Bob and Wendy McDonald visited Ethiopia in March of 2007 for some very exciting, exotic birding.

There are 75 million people in this ‘Horn of Africa’ country, and 85% live in rural areas. Ethiopia, historically known as Abyssinia, spreads over 1.1 million square kilometres, the second largest country in Africa. It is also the oldest independent country, never colonised

are over 83 other dialects and 80 different ethnic groups.

Ethiopia is the ‘Cradle of Levant’ – the home of Louis Leakey’s famous hominid find ‘Lucy’ at 3.3 million years old. (Newer finds date the earliest human ancestors at 5.5 million years old.) The most influential modern-era leader was Haile Selassie, its king from 1942 to 1974. Ethiopia is perhaps best known for its famines, droughts, and civil wars although, more recently, it has become

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heat was not a problem; the highest temperature there is in April at 22°C, while the coldest is in July at 17°C.

They visited the Bale Mountains, Awash National Park, Lake Langano, Wondo Genet, and Negelle Borena. The roads were extremely rugged, and the environment was mostly grassy plain interspersed with thorny scrub. The plethora of birds was amazing and wonderful to see. (Bob took pictures of only about half of the over 400 species they saw, and there are over 900 Ethiopian species. One great help was that each evening Negusie, their wonderful and patient guide, would go through the whole checklist and indicate which birds we had seen. They had time to look up each species just to confirm to themselves that they had indeed seen them.)

The first shown was the endemic Wattled Ibis, a dark grassland bird with a very long curved beak, photographed in an area of pretty parkland-like scenery, grasslands, cattle, and flowers surrounded by hills. The beautiful African Sacred Ibis (white and black) was next.

A nearby river was a tributary of the Blue Nile. Its hills were 200-300 metres high, showing their layers of exposed rock. Bob had taken a shot also of a monastery on the site of a much older one. Close by, birds sighted included a little Lemon Dove, an elegant Tawny Eagle, and a Steppe Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*).

The Cheleklaka wetlands and reservoir were full of birds: Collared Pratincole, Black-winged Stilt, and Spur-winged Lapwing. There were large flocks of Flamingos (Lesser); they winter there and are quite common on large lakes with a suitable depth for them. There were also Malachite Kingfisher, Red-knobbed Coot, Pied Kingfisher (twice the size of the Malachite), and White-breasted and Long-tailed Cormorants.

Two camels (not endemic to Ethiopia) were shown; they are not used as working animals but are important status symbols. A Northern Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill stood a metre high!

In Awash National Park, there was Beisa Oryx, Vultures on a large, flat-topped Acacia tree (White-backed, Egyptian, and Hooded), and a White-bellied Go-Way Bird with a large upright grey crest and a white stomach. There were Taita Fiscal (a tiny passerine raptor shrike), Southern Grey Shrike, and Black-bellied Bustard. Near a high plateau, there were White-browed Coucals, Soemmering's Gazelles, and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse.

When Bob and Wendy picnicked near some falls, Olive Baboons came to join them for dinner. There were Lesser Grey Shrike; Helmeted Guinea-fowl; a shot of a great expanse of hot peppers spread out to dry; a White-bellied Buffalo-weaver with a finch-like beak; Common Bulbuls at a water feeder; and a Shining Sunbird with an extremely long and curved beak. Sunbirds fill the hum- a high plateau, there were White-browed Coucals, Soemmering's Gazelles, and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse.

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There was a Dark Chanting Goshawk (coloured a smooth grey) amongst thorny scrubland, and a beautiful black and white Secretary bird in the grass, with its distinctive, black head 'quills'. The list goes on with Grey Heron, Great Egret, Yellow-billed Stork, and Marabou Stork at 1.2 - 1.5 metres high with huge beaks. Long-tailed and secretive Speckled Mousebirds welcomed them at a lunch stop, and a round, thatched farmer's hut contrasted with a nearby power line.

At Lake Langano, they found a pale blue Woodland Kingfisher and an African Hoopoe. Lake Ziway yielded Squacco Heron, Hamerkop, Great White Pelican, and African Jacana.

We saw part of the famous Great Rift Valley – a large, dramatic geological feature, almost a mini-grand canyon in itself.

The variety of birds went on with Vitelline Masked-weaver (yellow); Mocking Cliff-chat; Violet-backed Starling; Rufous-necked Wryneck; Northern Red-billed Hornbill; Northern Black Flycatcher; Superb Starling; White Helmetshrike with a fluffy head; Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush (robin-like); Clapperton's Francolin; Red-fronted Barbet; Striped Kingfisher; White-cheeked Turaco (endemic); a gorgeous Half-collared Kingfisher at 12-13 centimetres; and a Narina Trogon.

They also spotted a turquoise lizard (a chameleon), and at Lake Abijata, the largest lake in Ethiopia, there were tens of thousands of beautiful flamingos.

On a Wondo Genet woodland trail, with dry hills 400-500 metres high, there was a Dwarf Tree Squirrel (two to three times bigger than ours!); a Silvery-cheeked Hornbill (one of the giant hornbills); many flowers in bloom; a Blue-breasted Bee-eater (with an orange breast?!); Mountain Wagtails (grey with striped wings); a Brown Snake-eagle; and a Double-toothed Barbet.

Then they were driven, with their guide and driver, over two mountains to a different area and saw African Paradise Flycatchers with their very long white tails and their blue, grey, red, and white wings; Spot-breasted Plovers (an endemic lapwing in 'winter' plumage with no spots!); Blue-winged Goose (another endemic); Abyssinian Long-claw (a lark) with yellow throat and eyebrow; Lesser Kudu; Warthog; and Thomson's Gazelle.

In the Harenna Forest, there was Grey-headed Woodpecker and, in a high elevation wetland, Ruddy Shelduck. Once more, modern technology made itself known in the form of a telecommunications tower at a height of 4200 metres (13,000 feet).

The endemic Ethiopian wolves are found only in the mountains; they managed to photograph two of them. These wolves prey on mole rats. The chief vegetation here was Giant Lobelia on bare, grassed hills. This area was above the treeline and had lots of colourful alpine

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nut-naped Francolins, Golden-breasted Starlings, and Grey-headed Kingfisher. Tall, upright termite hills dotted the landscape as they descended to lower elevation.

In 1890, an African bird was discovered and described by an Italian prince at an unknown location. A specimen was collected in 1970 but it was not until 1980 when two were re-discovered. Taxonomists then decided upon the name (it's an endangered species) – Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. The McDonalds were lucky to catch a fleeting glimpse of this bird and even snap its picture through the thick forest canopy.

More birds! African Grey Hornbill; Red and Yellow Barbets on a termite mound; White-crowned Starling; Eastern Chanting Goshawk with a yellow cere on its beak; Mountain or Olive Thrush; a female African Pygmy Falcon (red-backed); Magpie Starlings – it was hard to keep up with the continued variety.

In Negelle, they stayed in the Hoteela Giriin (or – the Green Hotel). It was a lot rougher than their hotel in Addis Ababa.

More slides included a Grey-headed Bush-shrike; an Eastern Paradise Whydah with a distinctively shaped tail; Vulturine Guinea-fowl; Von der Decken's Hornbill; Emerald-spotted Wood-dove; African Fish Eagle with its

white breast; beautiful yellow butterflies; Black-throated Barbet; a female Straw-tailed Whydah (looking like a large, pale junco); Black-capped Social-weavers; Black-chested Snake-eagle; Shelley's Starling (red and blue); Rosy-patched Bush-shrike with pink breast; Hunter's Sunbird; and D'Arnaud's Barbets.

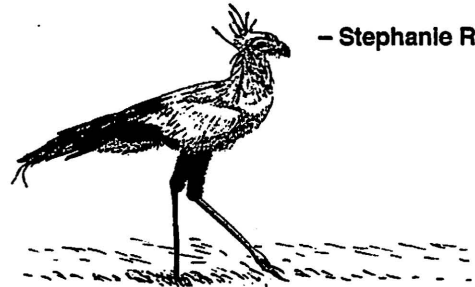
A typical Ethiopian meal (which you can try at the Ethiopian Restaurant on Quinpool Road) – a no-gluten wheat (*tef*) pancake called *injera*, bearing small mounds of tasty 'fillings' – was shown.

Back to the birds, the whole reason for Bob and Wendy's trip – Northern Wheatear in breeding plumage; Black-cheeked Waxbill (pale taupe with a blue beak); and a Jacobin Cuckoo.

At Lake Awasa they saw Vervet Monkeys, and Black-and-White Colubus Monkeys; wetland Spur-winged Geese, Hottentot Teal, Blue-headed Coucal; Black Heron 'canopy-feeding'; and African Pygmy Geese.

Thank you Bob and Wendy. What a wonderful birding trip!

– Stephanie Robertson



## FIELD TRIPS

### WATERFALLS

**Date:** Sat., April 19th, & Sun., April 20th

**Place:** Annapolis Valley

**Weather:** Sunny; varying from cool to hot

**Interpreters:** Richard and Grace Beazley

**Participants:** Saturday - 12; Sunday - 18

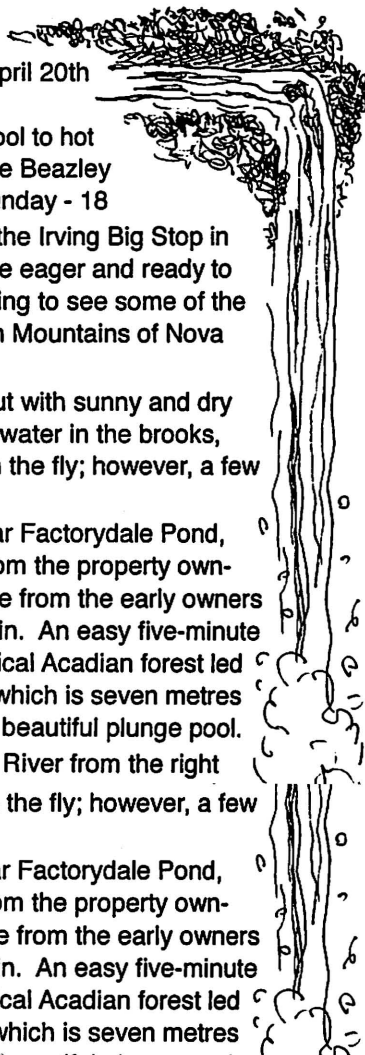
On Saturday, 12 hikers met at the Irving Big Stop in New Minas at 10:30 a.m. All were eager and ready to begin two days of driving and hiking to see some of the waterfalls on the South and North Mountains of Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley.

The trip was blessed throughout with sunny and dry weather, an ample flow of spring water in the brooks, and an absence of biting bugs on the fly; however, a few wood ticks were encountered!

We first visited Beals Falls, near Factorydale Pond, Kings County (with permission from the property owners). This waterfall takes its name from the early owners of this piece of the South Mountain. An easy five-minute hike along a footpath through typical Acadian forest led us to the two-tiered curved falls, which is seven metres high and five metres wide, with a beautiful plunge pool.

A small brook enters the South River from the right and an absence of biting bugs on the fly; however, a few wood ticks were encountered!

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the highway, is a small dam and power generating station that supplies power to the Town of Berwick.

After a ten-minute drive west we arrived at the car-park for our next stop – Crystal Falls near Rockville Notch, Kings County. After a very pleasant 30-minute hike along a woods road and footpath we arrived at the falls itself, which is on Mumford Brook.

This waterfall is eight metres high and six metres wide, also with a large plunge pool. It is much-visited, being accessible by way of ATVs as well as by hiking. It's a beautiful place – the waterfall and plunge pool is bordered by ten- to 15-metre slate and basalt cliffs that are partly covered by Hemlock and White Pine; its viewing area is large and sunbathed.

This is a popular swimming hole in the summer, but the only swimmer we saw was a rather large beaver who entertained us for several minutes. It was here that we stopped for lunch in the warm sunshine and beautiful surroundings, and the more hardy hikers exchanged their long-legged pants and long-sleeved shirts for shorts and t-shirts, some of us exploring the nearby coves and rock formations.

Afterwards, a few minutes drive west to Rockville Notch area is large and sunbathed.

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ter surging powerfully down through this impressive slate- and basalt-sided notch. This series of falls, lying between steep-sided cliffs, was awesome in both sight and sound and we could safely view them from vantage points along the well-worn trail. In the mid-1800s a dam was located just above the first waterfall, and a sawmill was located on the river's edge. Owned by the McMaster family, parts of the sawmill's foundation can be seen and walked through on the west side of the river.

To round out our first day of 'waterfalling', we drove west again for 45 minutes to Tupperville, Annapolis County, and with permission from two land owners, we hiked for 30 minutes up South Mountain to Tupperville Brook Falls. These falls, really a series of them, drop over 30 metres in vertical height through a deep, 100-metre-long ravine which consists of very large, rugged, and tilted granite rocks.

This waterfall was very impressive – the water flow was furious – and dangerous! These falls vary in height from three to 15 metres, with each level sporting a nice plunge pool. The waterway through the ravine is often moss- and fern-fringed (depending on the season), and was surrounded by a variety of large deciduous and coniferous trees. Walking over the rocks to see each level of the falls was difficult, but was do-able with caution. Only one hiker left them falls muddy from feet to thighs, perhaps she was too intent on looking for the buried solid-gold bell of Acadian legend!

Twelve tired but happy trekkers ended the day's activities with dinner at a local pub, enjoyed the rising of a nearly full moon in a clear evening sky, and retired to welcome and comfortable beds in a Bridgetown motel.

Sunday began with a continental breakfast, and the arrival of six additional hikers at 9:30 a.m. We all drove west along the Annapolis River and over the North Mountain to the shore of the beautiful Bay of Fundy. The bedrock of the mountain is basalt, amply strewn with chunks of granite and other rocks left by glacial activity, and it is covered by new-growth forest.

Many brooks flow off the North Mountain to the Bay of Fundy, and our goal was to see the waterfalls located on a few of those brooks. At Parkers Cove, (with permission from the land owner), we hiked a wet, muddy, sometimes rocky uphill woodlot road for 45 minutes to Robinson Brook Falls. About one-third of the way along the trail we found an attractive, wet-season falls on a small brook – a bonus. On the way to and from the falls, only one person slipped and fell into a muddy, cold pool of water, which was quite remarkable considering the slippery conditions.

The waterfall here is ten metres high, three to seven metres wide, and bridal veil in shape. The small ravine in which the falls is located is fully covered with large Hemlocks, thus the canopy is umbrella-like and there is virtually no undergrowth.

This is a most beautiful setting of black basalt, white falling water, and forest-green foliage for the wonderful music of the waterfall itself. Nearby is a rustic cabin

on the west side of the brook. It has a guest book in which many of us noted our thanks to the generous land owner.

After lunch on the windy Fundy shore (where some of us picked up one or two ticks on clothing which were quickly brushed away), we drove further east along Shore Road for 30 minutes to St. Croix Cove.

A five-minute hike downstream along a footpath brought us to the top of Poole Brook Falls, and after another couple of minutes of cautious descent we arrived at the bottom of the falls. The water in Poole Brook tumbles and slides down through a heavily wooded, steep-sided-ravine, and, in going over the basalt lip of the falls, shoots out several feet as it descends 18 metres to the bottom. This setting provided a dramatic display of falling water and ethereal rising mist. In its calmer summer mode, the falls has offered local farm workers a refreshing shower after a day in the hayfield!

At this point, eight had to depart for home, and ten of us decided to see another waterfall before concluding our trip. So we backtracked for 15 minutes by car to Youngs Cove, and then hiked for 15 more minutes up a woods road that is rapidly becoming overgrown, to Joe Brook Falls.

Interestingly, along this woods road we saw a domestic crocus in bloom and some 'witch's tails' on trees. This falls is four metres high and eight metres wide, and is located in a 20-metre high, but not particularly steep-sided, ravine. It is surrounded by softwood and hardwood trees, which are both lush and beautiful. This was a very peaceful setting, where one happy hiker played 'Pooh Sticks'.

All the falls of these two wonderful and exhilarating hiking days were bathed in dappled sunlight, and the scenery was magnificent. This last stop was the perfect place to slow down and reflect on the beauty of nature, appreciating our good fortune to have spent a weekend with people who treasure natural phenomena.

– Richard and Grace Beazley



## ARNELL LANDS BIOTA SURVEY

**Date:** Sunday, May 4th

**Place:** Captain Arnell Lands, Purcell's Cove

**Weather:** Sunny/cloudy; 12°C;

**Interpreter:** Bob McDonald

**Participants:** 17

Since a number of previous hikes into this Nova Scotia Nature Trust property have had to be cancelled, postponed, or abbreviated due to inclement weather, we were delighted to have a beautiful morning for our hike on this day – a mix of sun and cloud, with breezes from 5 to 10 km/hr, and the ambient temperature varying from cool to hot.

The 17 of us met at the Purcell's Cove trailhead at 10:00 a.m., eager for a spring walk and ready to contin-

ue our inventory of the property's flora and fauna. Since most of the participants had never visited the property previously, I thought that it was of the first priority to reach Flat Lake at the far end of the trail, so – off we went.

Almost immediately, we began to encounter what were for all of us the first butterflies of the season, (and the only species we would observe this day) – the small, blue Spring Azures. During the rest of the day, we must have observed more than a dozen of these little beauties. We heard and then observed a Northern Flicker, followed by a Hairy Woodpecker – the latter possibly excavating a nesting cavity.

We then spent some time at the northeast side of Purcell's Pond where the most noteworthy plant was Leatherleaf (still in bud) which carpets the lakeshore and bog habitats here. As I write this report (on May 26th), the Leatherleaf will be in glorious bloom, showing off its rows of tiny white bells. Flowering plants included Mayflower, Sweet Gale, and Broom Crowberry, which gave off clouds of pollen when touched! Goldthread was still in bud as well.

We then backtracked to cross the stream and pressed on towards Flat Lake, stopping from time to time to take in the panoramic views from the granite barrens towards the harbour. We noticed scat both from Snowshoe Hare and its primary predator – Coyote.

After another hour of hiking, we finally arrived at the shore of Flat Lake where we enjoyed our well-deserved lunch. We added to our previous bird list with sightings of Yellow-rumped Warbler (the only warbler seen), Pine Siskins, Grey Jay (acting as a sentinel over the Lake), Swainson's Thrush (heard), Ring-necked Duck (observed as we approached the lake but quickly disappeared), and, flying overhead, Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, and Broad-winged Hawk.

Finally, with some regrets, we had to take our leave from Flat Lake to begin our 1.5-hour hike back to the trailhead. The absence of flowering plants was compensated for to some degree by those with evergreen foliage like Wintergreen, Goldthread, Inkberry, and of course, the conifers.

Despite not having along our hoped-for lichen expert, we did stop from time to time to examine the lichens and mosses on the forest floor, the trees, and the rocks in the barrens. Several specimens were collected for later identification.

Happily, we had no unfortunate incidents (the various hand-hewn bridges are slippery) and we arrived safely back at the trailhead at around 3:00 p.m.

Although the date for our outing was rather early for flowering plants and avian migrants, we did manage to add a few more species to our collective flora/fauna lists and these are noted below (see Spring #130 of The Halifax Field Naturalist for the previous listings). Note also that we have added several new categories.

Finally, many thanks to our two scribes and all participants for their observational skills; let's plan to do this again a bit later in the season!

– Bob McDonald

## ARNELL LANDS SPECIES

(Additions only)

### Ferns

Rock Polypody

*Polypodium virginianum* L.

### Lichens

Fishnet Cladonia

*Cladonia boryi*

Horsehair (Bear hair) Lichen

*Bryoria* sp.

Beard Lichens

*Usnea* sp.

(2 types – long/hanging, and short/bushy)

Varied Rag Lichen

*Plasmatia glauca*

Crumbled Rag Lichen

*Plasmatia tuckermanii*

Map Lichen

*Rhizocarpon* sp.

Concentric Ring Lichen

*Arctoparmelia centrifuga*

Ball (Olive) Lichen

*Cladonia strepsilis*

Tube Lichen

*Hypogymnia* sp.

Bottlebrush Shield Lichen

*Parmelia squarosa*

Rock Foam Lichen

*Stereocaulon saxatile*

### Insects

Spring Azure

*Celastrina argiolus*

Water Strider

Hemiptera

Lady Beetle (species unknown)

Daytime Firefly

Bumblebee

Ants – red and black

### Birds

Double-crested Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax auritus*

Broad-winged Hawk

*Buteo platypterus*

Herring Gull

*Larus argentatus*

Hairy Woodpecker

*Picoides villosus*

Swainson's Thrush

*Catharus ustulatus*

Song Sparrow

*Melospiza melodia*

Purple Finch

*Carpodacus purpureus*

Pine Siskin

*Carduelis pinus*

### Amphibians

Spring Peeper

*Hyla crucifer*

### Fungi

Bracket fungus (on white birch)

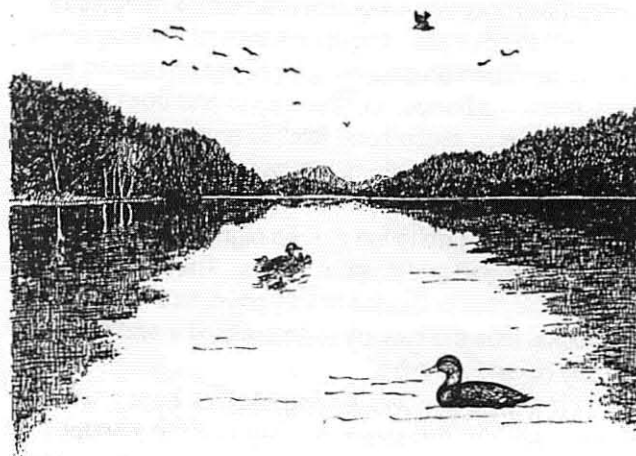
### Mosses

Sphagnum Moss

*Sphagnum Cataraena*

### Other

Liverworts



# ALMANAC



This almanac is for the dates of events which are not found in our HFN 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.

"Summer is a miracle. The bare, frozen earth turns green overnight as the crops pop out of the ground with an almost audible "spring", like bedsprings; they grow and ripen, ready for harvest, in ten weeks. Summer on the prairie is passionate and selfish, a desperate grab for warmth and life."

– Heather Robertson, "Miami, Manitoba", in Grass Roots (1973)

## NATURAL EVENTS

- 10 Jun. -20 Jun.** The earliest mornings of the year; the sun rises at 5:29 ADT.
  - 18 Jun.** Full Moon; moonrise at 21:33 ADT.
  - 20 Jun.** Summer Solstice at 20:59 ADT. Summer begins in the Northern hemisphere. The longest day of the year, with 15 hours and 34 minutes of daylight at Halifax.
  - 22 Jun. -30 Jun.** The latest evenings of the year; the sun sets at 21:04 ADT.
  - 15 Jul.** Canada's "Parks Day" – look for events at local parks.
  - 18 Jul.** Full Moon; moonrise at 21:21 ADT.
  - 1 Aug.** Total/Partial Solar Eclipse. The eclipse as seen from Nova Scotia will be a partial one, at sunrise.
  - 5 Aug. -12 Aug.** Average dates of the hottest days of summer (average daily maximum is 22.5°C.)
  - 11 Aug.** Perseid Meteor showers peak.
  - 13 Aug.** Average date for temperatures to start decreasing.
  - 16 Aug.** Full Moon rises at 20:13 ADT.
  - 15 Sept.** Full Moon rises at 19:17. Large tides follow for the next two days.
  - 22 Sept.** Autumnal Equinox at 12:45 ADT. Fall begins in the Northern Hemisphere.
  - 28 Sept.** Fifth anniversary of Hurricane Juan.
  - 30 Sept.** Average date for first frost in Halifax (i.e. Env. Canada says there is 1:10 chance that we will have frost before this). Look forward to 210 days of frosty weather.
- Sources: Atmospheric Environment Service, Climate Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.; Blomidon Naturalists Society's 2008 Calendar; Burke-Gaffney Observatory, Saint Mary's University



## SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON SUMMER AND EARLY FALL SATURDAYS

<b>7 Jun.</b>	5:30	20:58	<b>5 Jul.</b>	5:36	21:02
<b>14 Jun.</b>	5:29	21:01	<b>12 Jul.</b>	5:41	20:59
<b>21 Jun.</b>	5:30	21:03	<b>19 Jul.</b>	5:48	20:54
<b>28 Jun.</b>	5:32	21:04	<b>26 Jul.</b>	5:55	20:47
<b>2 Aug.</b>	6:03	20:38	<b>6 Sept.</b>	6:43	19:41
<b>9 Aug.</b>	6:11	20:29	<b>13 Sept.</b>	6:52	19:28
<b>16 Aug.</b>	6:19	20:18	<b>20 Sept.</b>	7:00	19:15
<b>23 Aug.</b>	6:27	20:06	<b>27 Sept.</b>	7:08	19:02
<b>30 Aug.</b>	6:35	19:54			

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

## ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

**Blomidon Naturalists Society:** Indoor meetings take place on the 3rd Monday of the month, in the auditorium of The

<b>16 Aug.</b>	6:19	20:18	<b>20 Sept.</b>	7:00	19:15
<b>23 Aug.</b>	6:27	20:06	<b>27 Sept.</b>	7:08	19:02
<b>30 Aug.</b>	6:35	19:54			

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

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**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 September, when they are held every Saturday. Tours begin at 7:00 p.m. between November 1st and March 30th, and at either 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. (depending on when it gets dark) between April 1st and October 31st. For more information, 496-8257; or [apwww.stmarys.ca/bgo/](http://apwww.stmarys.ca/bgo/).

**Friends of McNabs Island:** For more information, <http://www.mcnabsisland.ca/>.

**20 Sept. Rain date Sat., Sept. 27.** "McNabs Island Paddle and Clean-up", contact Katalin Ohlsson, 464-1236 (evenings); or [Katalin.Ohlsson@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:Katalin.Ohlsson@ns.sympatico.ca).

**Nova Scotia Bird Society:** Indoor meetings take place on the 4th Thursday of the month, September to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information, Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922, or <http://nsbs.chebucto.org/>.

**21 Jun.** "Shubenacadie", with leader Rob Woods, 261-2122; [rtrwoods@yahoo.com](mailto:rtrwoods@yahoo.com).

**22 Jun.** "Dawn Chorus on the Shearwater Flyer Trail", with leader Cindy Staicer, 494-3533, 478-3635; [cindy.staicer@dal.ca](mailto:cindy.staicer@dal.ca).

**12 Jul.** "Bird Islands", with leader Maureen Cameron-MacMillan, 727-2733; [maureen\\_cameron@excite.com](mailto:maureen_cameron@excite.com).  
**Pre-Registration is Necessary!**

**19 Jul.** "Wallace Bay", with leader Paul MacDonald, 627-2568; [paulrita2001@yahoo.com](mailto:paulrita2001@yahoo.com).

**2 Aug.** "Mahone Bay", with leader James Hirtle 693-2104; [jrhbirder@hotmail.com](mailto:jrhbirder@hotmail.com).

**16 Aug. Rain date 17 Aug.** "Cherry Hill Beach", with leader Eric Mills, 766-4606; [e.mills@dal.ca](mailto:e.mills@dal.ca).

**16 Aug. Rain date 17 Aug.** "Seal Island Boat Trip", contact Parnell Walker, 745-0226; [charbourecc@eastlink.ca](mailto:charbourecc@eastlink.ca).

**29 Aug. to 1 Sept.** "Bon Portage Island", with leader Joan Czapalay. **Pre-registration is necessary!** Email [joancz@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:joancz@ns.sympatico.ca), or 348-2803 – **before August 22!!**

**20 Sept.** "Editor's Field Trip – Peggy's Cove Loop", with leader Blake Maybank, 852-2077; [maybank@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:maybank@ns.sympatico.ca).

**25 Sept.** "Adventures among Birds in Western China", with speaker Martin Willison.

**Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources:** Many outings that will take place in Provincial Parks are listed in the "Parks are for People" programme, available free from the Department, 424-4321; at many museums, parks, and tourist bureaus; and on the web, <http://parks.gov.ns.ca/programs.asp>.

**Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History:** For information, 424-6099, 424-7353, or <http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mnh/>.

**3 Jun. to 28 Sept.** "Green Legacy: Canada's Native Plants and Plantscapes", produced by the Canadian Museum of Nature and Royal Botanical Gardens.

**6 Jun. -7 Jun.** "First Annual Nova Scotia BioBlitz at Long Lake Provincial Park", contact [steven.smith@smu.ca](mailto:steven.smith@smu.ca).

**15 Jun.** "Happy 86th Birthday: a Party for Gus, the Museum's Gopher Tortoise".

**21 Jun. Rain date 28 Jun.** "Bat Walk at Smiley's Provincial Park", with Museum zoologist Andrew Hebda.  
**Preregistration is required!!; 424-3563.**

**1 Jul. to 2 Sept.** "Butterfly House".

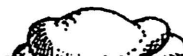
**2 Aug.** "Stream Saunter", with Museum zoologist Andrew Hebda at Smiley's Provincial Park (also known as Meander River Provincial Park). For more information, 424-3563.

**Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society:** Meets 4th Monday of the month, September to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information, Heather Drope, 423-7032, or <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/~nswfs/>.

**Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax Chapter):** Meets 3rd Friday of each month in Room L176 of the Loyola Academic Building, Saint Mary's University, 8:00 p.m. For more information, <http://halifax.rasc.ca/>.

**29 Aug. 1 Sept.** "NOVA EAST", Atlantic Canada's longest running star party, at Smiley's Provincial Park near Brooklyn in Hants County.

– compiled by Patricia L. Chalmers

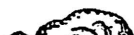


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– compiled by Patricia L. Chalmers



# HALIFAX TIDE TABLE



## July-juillet

## August-août

## September-septembre

Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres	Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres	Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres		
1	0007	0.3	0.1	16	0049	1.0	0.3	1	0147	0.3	0.1	16	0137	0.7	0.2	1	0257	0.7	0.2	16	0213	0.7	0.2		
TU	0601	5.2	1.6	WE	0658	4.9	1.5	0746	5.9	1.8	0746	5.2	1.6	0849	6.2	1.9	0818	5.9	1.8	TU	0818	5.9	1.8		
MA	1215	1.3	0.4	WE	1301	2.3	0.7	1408	1.3	0.4	1342	1.6	0.5	1526	1.0	0.3	1442	0.7	0.2	MA	1442	0.7	0.2		
	1806	6.6	2.0	ME	1847	5.6	1.7	1951	6.2	1.9	1943	5.9	1.8	2105	5.9	1.8	2036	5.9	1.8		2036	5.9	1.8		
2	0106	0.0	0.0	17	0129	1.0	0.3	2	0237	0.0	0.0	17	0213	0.7	0.2	2	0336	0.7	0.2	17	0251	0.7	0.2		
WE	0700	5.6	1.7	0738	5.2	1.6	0835	6.2	1.9	0821	5.6	1.7	0927	6.2	1.9	0855	6.2	1.9	WE	0855	6.2	1.9			
ME	1318	1.3	0.4	TH	1336	2.0	0.6	1502	1.0	0.3	1422	1.3	0.4	1609	1.0	0.3	1527	0.3	0.1	ME	1527	0.3	0.1		
	1905	6.6	2.0	JE	1928	5.6	1.7	2041	6.2	1.9	2021	5.9	1.8	2147	5.9	1.8	2119	5.6	1.7		2119	5.6	1.7		
3	0202	0.0	0.0	18	0207	1.0	0.3	3	0324	0.3	0.1	18	0248	0.7	0.2	3	0413	1.3	0.4	18	0333	0.7	0.2		
TH	0758	5.9	1.8	0816	5.2	1.6	0920	6.2	1.9	0920	5.9	1.8	0855	5.9	1.8	1005	6.2	1.9	0935	6.2	1.9		0935	6.2	1.9
JE	1418	1.3	0.4	FR	1410	2.0	0.6	1553	1.3	0.4	1504	1.3	0.4	1650	1.3	0.4	1615	0.3	0.1	TH	1615	0.3	0.1		
	2002	6.6	2.0	VE	2008	5.9	1.8	2128	6.2	1.9	2100	5.9	1.8	2228	5.6	1.7	2203	5.6	1.7	JE	2203	5.6	1.7		
4	0255	0.0	0.0	19	0243	0.7	0.2	4	0408	0.3	0.1	19	0323	0.7	0.2	4	0447	1.6	0.5	19	0420	1.0	0.3		
FR	0852	5.9	1.8	0852	5.2	1.6	1002	6.2	1.9	0929	5.9	1.8	1042	5.9	1.8	1042	5.9	1.8	1017	6.2	1.9	FR	1017	6.2	1.9
VE	1517	1.3	0.4	SA	1446	2.0	0.6	1643	1.3	0.4	1547	1.0	0.3	1733	1.3	0.4	1709	0.7	0.2	VE	1709	0.7	0.2		
	2056	6.6	2.0	SA	2046	5.9	1.8	2213	5.9	1.8	2140	5.9	1.8	2309	5.2	1.6	2249	5.6	1.7		2249	5.6	1.7		
5	0347	0.0	0.0	20	0319	0.7	0.2	5	0451	1.0	0.3	20	0400	0.7	0.2	5	0525	2.0	0.6	20	0518	1.3	0.4		
SA	0943	6.2	1.9	0927	5.6	1.7	1041	6.2	1.9	1005	5.9	1.8	1120	5.6	1.7	1120	5.6	1.7	1102	5.9	1.8	SA	1102	5.9	1.8
SA	1616	1.3	0.4	SU	1526	1.6	0.5	1733	1.3	0.4	1634	1.0	0.3	1819	1.6	0.5	1810	0.7	0.2	SA	1810	0.7	0.2		
	2148	6.2	1.9	DI	2123	5.9	1.8	2256	5.6	1.7	2221	5.6	1.7	2351	4.9	1.5	2338	5.2	1.6		2338	5.2	1.6		
6	0438	0.3	0.1	21	0354	0.7	0.2	6	0533	1.3	0.4	21	0441	1.0	0.3	6	0613	2.3	0.7	21	0627	1.6	0.5		
SU	1031	6.2	1.9	1002	5.6	1.7	1121	5.9	1.8	1042	5.9	1.8	1202	5.2	1.6	1151	5.6	1.7	SU	1151	5.6	1.7			
DI	1713	1.3	0.4	MO	1609	1.6	0.5	1822	1.6	0.5	1725	1.0	0.3	1908	2.0	0.6	1915	1.0	0.3	DI	1915	1.0	0.3		
	2236	5.9	1.8	LU	2201	5.9	1.8	2340	5.2	1.6	2304	5.6	1.7	SA			SA								
7	0527	0.7	0.2	22	0431	1.0	0.3	7	0617	1.6	0.5	22	0530	1.3	0.4	7	0036	4.9	1.5	22	0033	4.9	1.5		
MO	1115	6.2	1.9	1037	5.6	1.7	1201	5.9	1.8	1123	5.9	1.8	0714	2.6	0.8	0739	2.0	0.6	MO	0739	2.0	0.6			
LU	1810	1.6	0.5	TU	1657	1.6	0.5	1913	1.6	0.5	1823	1.0	0.3	1248	5.2	1.6	1247	5.6	1.7	LU	1247	5.6	1.7		
	2324	5.6	1.7	MA	2240	5.6	1.7	JE			2351	5.2	1.6	2001	2.0	0.6	2021	1.0	0.3		2021	1.0	0.3		
8	0617	1.0	0.3	23	0511	1.0	0.3	8	0025	4.9	1.5	23	0630	1.6	0.5	8	0131	4.6	1.4	23	0140	4.9	1.5		
TU	1159	5.9	1.8	1113	5.9	1.8	0705	2.0	0.6	1208	5.6	1.7	0818	2.6	0.8	0847	2.0	0.6	TU	0847	2.0	0.6			
MA	1906	1.6	0.5	WE	1749	1.6	0.5	1244	5.6	1.7	1925	1.0	0.3	1344	4.9	1.5	1356	5.2	1.6	MA	1356	5.2	1.6		
				ME	2323	5.6	1.7	2004	1.6	0.5	SA			2054	2.0	0.6	2125	1.0	0.3		2125	1.0	0.3		
9	0012	5.2	1.6	24	0555	1.3	0.4	9	0115	4.6	1.4	24	0044	4.9	1.5	9	0244	4.6	1.4	24	0310	4.9	1.5		
WE	0706	1.3	0.4	1151	5.9	1.8	0801	2.3	0.7	0737	2.0	0.6	0918	2.6	0.8	0953	2.0	0.6	WE	0953	2.0	0.6			
ME	1243	5.6	1.7	TH	1844	1.6	0.5	1334	5.2	1.6	1301	5.6	1.7	1455	4.9	1.5	1521	5.2	1.6	ME	1521	5.2	1.6		
	1959	1.6	0.5	JE			2055	2.0	0.6	2030	1.0	0.3	2149	2.0	0.6	2227	1.0	0.3		2227	1.0	0.3			
10	0103	4.9	1.5	25	0010	5.2	1.6	10	0216	4.6	1.4	25	0147	4.9	1.5	10	0411	4.6	1.4	25	0437	4.9	1.5		
TH	0756	1.6	0.5	0646	1.6	0.5	0900	2.3	0.7	0846	2.0	0.6	1013	2.6	0.8	1056	1.6	0.5	TH	1056	1.6	0.5			
JE	1331	5.6	1.7	FR	1235	5.6	1.7	1433	4.9	1.5	1406	5.6	1.7	1609	4.9	1.5	1642	5.6	1.7	JE	1642	5.6	1.7		
	2052	1.6	0.5	VE	1943	1.3	0.4	2146	2.0	0.6	2136	1.0	0.3	2242	1.6	0.5	2325	1.0	0.3		2325	1.0	0.3		
11	0159	4.6	1.4	26	0103	4.9	1.5	11	0332	4.6	1.4	26	0308	4.6	1.4	11	0513	4.9	1.5	26	0534	5.6	1.7		
FR	0849	2.0	0.6	0745	1.6	0.5	1000	2.6	0.8	0954	2.0	0.6	1102	2.3	0.7	1155	1.3	0.4	FR	1155	1.3	0.4			
VE	1424	5.2	1.6	SA	1325	5.6	1.7	1541	4.9	1.5	1525	5.6	1.7	1707	5.2	1.6	1743	5.6	1.7	VE	1743	5.6	1.7		
	2143	1.6	0.5	SA	2044	1.3	0.4	2238	1.6	0.5	2240	1.0	0.3	2332	1.3	0.4									
12	0305	4.6	1.4	27	0206	4.9	1.5	12	0449	4.6	1.4	27	0439	4.9	1.5	12	0557	4.9	1.5	27	0019	1.0	0.3		
SA	0944	2.3	0.7	0849	2.0	0.6	1055	2.3	0.7	1100	1.6	0.5	1148	2.0	0.6	0619	5.9	1.8	SA	0619	5.9	1.8			
SA	1523	5.2	1.6	SU	1426	5.6	1.7	1646	4.9	1.5	1646	5.6	1.7	1753	5.6	1.7	1248	1.3	0.4	SA	1248	1.3	0.4		
	2233	1.6	0.5	DI	2147	1.0	0.3	2328	1.6	0.5	2342	0.7	0.2	VE			1832	5.9	1.8		1832	5.9	1.8		
13	0416	4.6	1.4	28	0321	4.9	1.5	13	0547	4.9	1.5	28	0548	5.2	1.6	13	0017	1.0	0.3	28	0107	0.7	0.2		
SU	1041	2.3	0.7	0955	2.0	0.6	1143	2.3	0.7	1203	1.6	0.5	1203	1.6	0.5	0634	5.2	1.6	SU	0634	5.2	1.6			
DI	1622	5.2	1.6	MO	1537	5.9	1.8	1739	5.2	1.6	1753	5.9	1.8	1232	1.6	0.5	1336	1.0	0.3	DI	1336	1.0	0.3		
	2321	1.3	0.4	LU	2252	1.0	0.3	ME			JE			1834	5.6	1.7	1917	5.9	1.8		1917	5.9	1.8		
14	0520	4.6	1.4	29	0442	4.9	1.5	14	0015	1.3	0.4	29	0038	0.7	0.2	14	0058	1.0	0.3	29	0151	1.0	0.3		
MO	1135	2.3	0.7	1103	1.6	0.5	0632	4.9	1.5	0641	5.6	1.7	0708	5.6	1.7	0738	6.2	1.9	MO	0738	6.2	1.9			
LU	1715	5.2	1.6	TU	1650	5.9	1.8	1225	2.3	0.7	1301	1.3	0.4	1315	1.3	0.4	1419	1.0	0.3	LU	1419	1.0	0.3		
				MA	2354	0.7	0.2	1824	5.6	1.7	1847	6.2	1.9	1915	5.9	1.8	1959	5.9	1.8		1959	5.9	1.8		
15	0006	1.3	0.4	30	0552	5.2	1.6	15	0058	1.0	0.3	30	0129	0.3	0.1	15	0136	0.7	0.2	30	0231	1.0	0.3		
SA	0544	2.3	0.7	0544	2.3	0.7	0727	5.9	1.8	0727	5.9	1.8	0743	5.9	1.8	0815	6.2	1.9	SA	0815	6.2	1.9			
SA	1523	5.2	1.6	SU	1426	5.6	1.7	1646	4.9	1.5	1646	5.6	1.7	1753	5.6	1.7	1248	1.3	0.4	SA	1248	1.3	0.4		
	2233	1.6	0.5	DI	2147	1.0	0.3	2328	1.6	0.5	2342	0.7	0.2	VE			1832	5.9	1.8		1832	5.9	1.8		
13	0416	4.6	1.4	28	0321	4.9	1.5	13	0547	4.9	1.5	28	0548	5.2	1.6	13	0017	1.0	0.3	28	0107	0.7	0.2		
SU	1041	2.3	0.7	0955	2.0	0.6	1143	2.3	0.7	1203	1.6	0.5	1203												

## Nature Notes

### APRIL

**Janet Dalton** – reported that the **American Goldfinches** were moulting and turning bright yellow. **Jack and Jacqueline Warkentin** – are delighted by the advance of spring bloom in their garden: **heather** has been in bloom for two weeks now; **crocuses** came into bloom today; and **Hellebore** is also in bloom. **Patricia Chalmers** – has seen a number of **American Robins** and **Common Grackles** in recent days; while a few individuals of this species overwinter in the south end, especially along the railway cut, she is now seeing more, and is certain that they are migrants. Another sure sign of spring was reported by **Clarence Stevens Jr.**, who said that the **Yellow-spotted Salamanders** have been active for the last few weeks in some of our local ponds. He has seen spermatophores but none of their egg masses yet. **Wood Frogs**, on the other hand, have left egg masses already, even in ponds which are still partly iced-in. Look for the Yellow-spotted Salamanders at Julie's Pond in Hemlock Ravine on the next warm damp evening! **Peter Webster** – has seen **Blue Jays** carrying straw and twigs in their beaks. **Marion Sensen** – has heard Song Sparrows singing in the mornings.

**Clarence Stevens Jr.** chimed in with more reports of early migrants – lots of **American Robins** and **Common Grackles**, as well as **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Fox Sparrows**, the first **Killdeer**, and so on. Along the coastline, off Chebucto Head and Hartlen Point, he has seen large numbers of **Red-necked Grebes** heading north. **Black-headed Gulls** and **Great Cormorants**, which have overwintered here, are now in breeding plumage. Our speaker for the evening, **Duncan Smith**, reported that he has seen numbers of **Wood Frogs** in Queens County crossing the roads on a damp night. **Judy Hayes** reported that one of our first wildflowers, the **Coltsfoot**, is now in bloom.

– Patricia Chalmers

### MAY

**Isabelle Brousseau** – everything was green at Dawson Brook Falls in Ellershouse. **Brian Ferguson** – on Sunday, April 26th, the **surf** at Herring Cove was extremely wild and dangerous. **Joan Czapalay** – it's time to put out the **hummingbird** feeders; four were already reported in Nova Scotia. **Peter Webster** – on April 12th to 14th, **Wood Frogs** were heard at White's Point, Lunenburg County. **Lesley Butters** – on April 17th, next to the Waegwoltic Club at sunset, there was a great commotion; 100 or so **crows** were dive-bombing a **Merlin** in a spruce tree. Finally, they succeeded in routing it, and it flew off to the west chased by seven or eight of them. In mid-April, **two Harlequin Ducks** were seen swimming toward Halifax by **Jean Hartley**. **Karen McKendry** – reported seeing **five salamanders** on the YNC salamander trip (28 children attended) to the Heart-shaped Pond in Bedford; one was as large as a hot dog!

– Stephanie Robertson

### JUNE

**Patricia Chalmers** – heard **Blackpoll Warblers** (two weeks later than normal) and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** (**Bob McDonald** also saw a few over the last weekend in April). She's seen none of the usual few **Chimney Swifts** around St. Mary's, but has seen some at the Frog Pond along with some **Nighthawks**. **Bob McDonald** reported that **Whippoorwhills** are becoming rare now, and **Jim Wolford** cited the *Globe & Mail* article re the alarming decline of **flying-insect eating birds**. **Elliott Hayes** – their property's bird population has disappeared due to a Sharp-shinned Hawk nesting in a large pine in front of their house. **Regine Maass** – hardly any **blackflies** in her garden this year. She's had **rats** in her compost heap, put out a trap, and the trap disappeared! There are no plants growing there due to the rats eating them all. **Stephanie Robertson** – many flowering shrubs in point Pleasant Park. **Jim Wolford** – advised the audience to go to the Noggins Farm webcam website to see the young eagles fledging. **Pat Chalmers** and **Bob McDonald** – a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** (usually found only in western Canada) on Ogilvie St. and at the lower marsh in Point Pleasant.

– Stephanie Robertson

### NEXT DEADLINE

21st of August for the September Issue

Send contributions to 'Newsletter', c/o NS Museum of Natural History, or  
email submissions to [sdhaythorn@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:sdhaythorn@ns.sympatico.ca)