THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST

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GRAPHICS All uncredited illustrations are by H. Derbyshire or from copyright-free sources. p.3 - Black Duck & young, John Dick, Birds and their Ways; **Tide Table** - Canadian Hydrographic Service, Fisheries & Oceans Canada.

HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL – S. Robertson

Ah, the hubris of good health. For many years, no hint of a major cold or illness. Then one does hit, and all the tasks so easily and speedily done are one by one dropped to constant exhaustion and malaise. Two months of hunkering down and looking inward waiting for it all to be over.

Not much was seen or observed during this down period. However, recently, on a cold dark morning in December, calling our cat in a snowstorm, a flock of Canada Geese was heard flying overhead making for warmer points south. The feeders were kept filled, and our suet station continued to attract both Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, male and female; White-and Red-breasted Nuthatches; the ubiquitous Black-capped Chickadees; the occasional interesting visitor such as a female Purple Finch; and every once in awhile, a desperate squirrel.

As things began to look up, we were aware once more of all the natural phenomena, and we enjoyed the conjunction of the crescent Moon with Venus and Jupiter, clearly seen to the southwest of our house.

In this issue Pat Leader continues the fascinating Bedford Waterfront Development saga *(p.4)*, and there will be many January astronomy actiivties in which to participate *(**Astronomy N.S.**, p.9)*. A Merry Christmas, and a Happpy New Year to everyone.

THE YEAR OF ASTRONOMY

2009 is the UNESCO International Year of Astronomy (IYA), a global celebration of the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of the telescope to investigate the sky. A vibrant Nova Scotian community of both professional and amateur astronomers, under the banner of Astronomy Nova Scotia, are organising and promoting IYA activities. As 'naturalists of the night sky', they have a strong kinship with nature and environmental groups.

One of the IYA cornerstone projects is "Dark Skies Awareness", responding to an urgent need to preserve dark night skies for posterity in places such as urban cultural landscapes, national parks, sites connected with astronomical observations, and sites of astronomical importance. The loss of dark night skies is a serious and growing issue that impacts astronomical research, human health, ecology, safety, security, economics, and energy conservation.

http://www.astronomy2009.org/globalprojects/cornerstones/darkskiesawareness/

There'll be an opening celebration of events, from the 7th to the 13th of January *(see our Winter Almanac, p. 13)*, and some of them will be directly concerned with "Dark Skies Awareness" and responsible lighting. During 2009, they hope to launch some initiatives for Urban Sky Parks and Dark Sky Reserves in Nova Scotia. For more information, go to **www.astronomynovascotia.ca**.

A THANK YOU FOR "TAXONOMY"

Many thanks for Ursula's article on Taxonomy in the last issue (Fall 2008, #132). While I was working on a project at the time, I found myself in the Children's section of a seemingly deserted library, as most of the children were (guess where) on the computers!

I would like to recommend a children's book which deals with Ursula's topic – The Tree of Life; The Incredible Biodiversity of Life on the Earth, by Rochelle Strauss, illustrated by Margo Thompson, Kids Can Press, Toronto, 2004.

I also enjoyed The Jumbo book of Nature Science, by Pamela Hickman and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Kids Can Press, Toronto 1996. This is a book that both children and their parents would enjoy, as it provides practical things to do and make while learning more about nature.

Both books are well illustrated and while this information will be too late for Christmas, they are 'must-have' books for any time of the year for anyone, especially for our Young Naturalists.

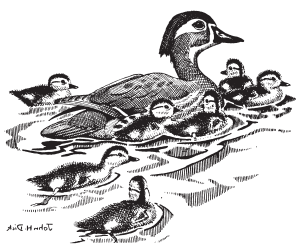
– Patricia Leader

ENVIRONMENTAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Halifax Public Libraries is pleased to announce it has purchased over 300 children's titles on environmental issues thanks to a generous grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. These books, aimed at the elementary and junior high school levels, cover a wide range of subject areas including climate change, wildlife conservation, hybrid cars, animal rights, and solar energy.

Materials are now available at all 14 branches and can be borrowed by anyone with a Halifax Public Libraries card.

NEW AND RETURNING



David Blackwell
Heather Dyment
Dawn George
Rebecca Goreham
Doug Kane
Ann and Rainer Minzloff
Wayne Neily
Brian Taylor
Wendy Walsh

SPECIAL REPORTS

BEDFORD WATERFRONT: STAGE II

– Pat Leader

Has it really been two years since I shared with readers the story of the Bedford Waterfront? This 'project' is part of 'Vision HRM', and I really cannot let another year go by without a fresh chapter of this municipal saga to 'develop' the waterfront area.

Since that time I have been dutifully walking the area, (affectionately known as the giant's causeway) – a path lined somewhat less than delicately with boulders and surrounded by a constant movement of in-fill. The wild flowers put on their usual show this year, their roots still looking for hidden pockets of soil among the rubble. The rose bushes were firm and some trees had grown to nearly two metres! The water's edge has changed dramatically, and as I once pointed out to our MP Prince Geoff of Ottawa, we shall soon be able to cross to Dartmouth on dry land. No more talk of bridges, please – our third crossing is in hand. What we *may* need is a canal through which yachts and kayaks can glide through from the Bedford Bay (the north part of the Basin) to the magic city of Halifax.

I have never been entirely clear about the findings of a special committee which was organised in February of 2007. It met mostly weekly until October of that year, when approval was given for the HRM Vision plan. I had heard that there was a desire to get more citizens involved to grapple with a long wish list of things that the Bedford citizens thought they really needed on the waterfront, such as more condos, a theatre, an aquarium, a ferry, sport fields, commercial space, and did I imagine a casino or hear about anything with a tinge of green?

The process of bringing in rocks for the in-fill continued in fits and starts. A team of stocky men was organised to get it moving. Unfortunately, they were not unionised, and Peter the Mayor said they had to go. No matter, as a new group was brought in, but apparentlyu the cold working conditions were too much for them. A third crew stepped up, and somehow the in-fill continued to grow, but – nobody could say where it would all end and who was guiding it.

In the summer, the direction of my walks along the Basin were abruptly realigned. The giant's causeway was fork-lifted to one side and new notices directed us all onto the gravel road. It was like the hare and the tortoise, the dogs being the hares who pulled me around rocks while I kept a wary eye out for fast moving trucks. I waited for news from the media (from the visioning committee perhaps) to see what grand plans were in the making. None came. But, some time later, a splendid artistic drawing appeared in the newspaper, you know the kind – the views are fairytale-like, the trees soar to the sky, and the Basin waters are bluer than the Mediterranean. There in the background, the MacKay bridge looked like a rainbow to a glorious nether-land. The sketch included a siting for two – yes you guessed it – new condos on the edge of the Basin. It took me some time to orient the sketch to see exactly where the new site was to be. Not on the in-fill, where I expected it, but instead it was next to the existing Economical Insurance building close to the North Pier. The area, in fact, where Stage One had had previous plans for two commercial buildings. While I was in the sales office to check on details I learned that the new tenants were being wooed by the promise of a tree-lined boulevard stretching to the South Pier – one mystery solved.

Alas I had to turn down a chance to buy new accommodation with apartments overlooking either the Basin, the in-fill, Sobeys, or – more in my price range – the brick wall of the neighbouring condominium. After all, the dogs and I could still use the proposed walk when it finally materialised.

This fall I went to a community meeting which was a follow-up from one two years ago. You can see my social life is a little devoid of excitement. Certainly no glass coach has ever stopped outside my door. At this fall meeting, it was reported that a proposal had materialised of yet *another* in-fill which would extend from the Bedford Waterfront, along the western shores of the Basin, right up to Birch Cove. Also, rubbing intimate shoulders with the railway line, there was a proposal for a future multi-purpose trail which eventually would lead south to downtown Halifax and north all around the Dartmouth shore. The proposed commuter ferry idea and railway line were given short shrift, though Birch Cove was mentioned as a ferry stop.

The trail had *some* merits. In decades to come commuters will be able to rise with the dawn or maybe the dark and walk, peddle, ski, or snowshoe their way to the office in town without hindrance of tickets or traffic jams. Remember the report of the 60-yr old Swede who was healthier than a 30-yr North American? Well look out Swedes, Nova Scotians are set to become so healthy that medical care will go the way of useless words like 'carbon paper' and 'one dollar bills'. I'll not be around but I'm proposing that a suitable name for the trail would be Dick Whittington's Way. A memorial to a lad who was forced to sling his goods in a bag and trundle off to the golden, paved streets of old London town. Our lads and lasses will need only a bag of fresh clothes for the Halifax office.

The meeting had nearly concluded and I was prepared to ask the fatal question of where the Bedford South Waterfront plan "was at", as my Newfie friends would say. Unfortunately I had to leave the hall to move my car. when I returned, the participants were beating a hasty retreat. The in-fill word can be as tiresome as the daily porridge of the three bears. But it was to my advantage after all, as I was able to meet two sages, somewhat younger than I had imagined, but indeed people in-the-know, who actually worked with the waterfront committee. It seemed that the project did not have sufficient funds to tell the public what was happening. Was this a surprise?

But who was controlling the in-fill? I was directed to a website and I encourage you to look it up – the Bedford

Waterfront Project. Here I read that Stage One had been completed but that Two was at the mercy of the in-fill. A grand total of sixty acres was envisaged but this fairy story still had no foreseeable 'happily everlasting' ending. Alas, I must continue to walk the dogs on the rocky road and imagine the delight of gardens, sea views, commuter ferries, trains, and marathon trails for another year.

(On November 24th, 2008, an item was aired on CBC Information Morning. It reported that the Halifax Water Front Development Corporation (amalgamated with the Bedford Waterfront Corporation in 2000) had been organised for decades and so far the only plan to materialise had been a parking area.

Patricia has been walking trails since 1955 and building and writing about them since the 1980s. She says her comments on the Bedford project are akin to Cathy Jones' infamous remark "I'm just goofin' around, that's all!"

HFN TALKS

MARINE DIVERSITY 8 SEPT.

– Lillian Risley

The Ecology Action Centre's efforts related to oceans and the fishery focus on sustainable fisheries, fisheries policy, ocean zoning and marine planning, sustainable seafood, and coastal livelihoods.

Susanna Fuller is the Marine Conservation Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre and is concurrently completing her PhD at Dalhousie's Biology Department. She shared with us some of her lifelong fascination with sea creatures, described the current state of marine habitat and populations, and outlined the respective roles of government agencies and conservation groups.

The Federal Government has responsibility for the activities and health of Canadian fisheries. It has developed a governance framework to support federal policy. This includes the Fisheries Act, the National Marine Conservation Areas Act and the Canada Oceans Act. The acts and strategies are fundamentally good, but implementation has not been effective. Fisheries and Oceans Canada practises single species management, specifying where and how a particular species can be fished but failing to take into consideration ecosystem changes and impacts on other marine life. Some examples of the effect of this approach are that the cod stock is not recovering, numbers of large ocean predators are down 90%, and scallop dredges are found to bring up more than 200 other ocean species (mostly invertebrates).

Two types of fishing have come under fire as destructive to the overall marine environment. These are bottom trawling and pelagic longlining. As fish stocks became less plentiful, fishing trawlers fished deeper and deeper—and, by the time the cod stock collapsed, they were fishing at depths of as much as 1800 metres. This greatly increased the incidence of bycatch and damage to seabeds. Studies have shown that in areas where trawlers have been operating only 5% of reef-forming coral remains. In the yellow flounder fishery, 35% of the catch is cod and is thrown back (but will not survive). While the United States has listed species in need of protection and has closed large areas to bottom trawling, Canada has opened more areas to deep water trawling.

The swordfish fishery is an example of the problems with longlining as its harvesting method. This longline fishing results in a large bycatch—with roughly 40% - 50% of the catch discarded. Where this has been tabulated by observers, the discarded bycatch included leatherback and loggerhead turtles, marlin, sharks and juvenile swordfish. Only 9% of the swordfishing activity has observer coverage. Until 1963, commercial swordfishing was limited to harpooning. Now, 95% of the swordfish catch comes from longlining. In 2007, the longliners (35 vessels) harvested 1244 tonnes of swordfish with 47% of the total catch discarded. The small harpoon fishery (75 vessels) harvested 65 tonnes with 0% discard.

Our government needs to do much more than it has. Canada should enforce its current legislation, which is strong but only helps if enforced. The 1976 Act includes habitat protection and the 1986 amendments prohibited harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of habitat. To date, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has only applied these provisions to non-fishing acts and defeated a legal case which would have found dredging to be prohibited under the Act by successfully contending that fishing is not an act or undertaking. Canada should take specific action such as enforcing legislation to protect leatherbacks (Hawaii closes its swordfish fishery if 19 leatherbacks are caught), placing observers on 100% of the swordfishing boats, setting bycatch quotas, supporting the use of improved gear design (e.g. circle hooks), the use of gear to assist the release of bycatch, and reallocating swordfish quota between harpooning and longlining. It should also enforce the species at risk legislation, create fishery-by-fishery specifics concerning sustainability, and improve data collection to create the basis for change.

Non-government action can also help. The "Give swordfish a break" program, which asked the public to stop eating swordfish because of stock depletion in the 1990's, was successful in closing the fishery in nursery areas, leading to recovery of the stock. Organisations such as Sea Choice promote sustainable fishery practic-

es and encourage people to make responsible choices when purchasing seafood. There are also industry actions that deserve celebration. In Canso, use of experimental shrimp traps instead of dredging has resulted in high quality product with zero bycatch. In Indian Point there is a mussel and scallop farm that uses environmentally responsible practices and sells at the Farmer's Market. In New Brunswick there has been redevelopment of the weir fishery for herring.

And for those who wish to further their knowledge related to sustainable fisheries, you can read the book: Bottomfeeder: How to Eat Ethically in a World of Vanishing Seafood, by Taras Grescoe.

WILDLIFE REHAB 2 OCT.

– Stephanie Robertson

Veterinarian Helene Van Doninck, originally from New Waterford, Cape Breton, graduated from Alberta Veterinary College in 1991. She is still in part time private practice, is an instructor in the veterinary technology program at N.S. Agricultural C, and also teaches in Canada and internationally on topics of wildlife rehabilitation, medicine, and nutrition, and also oiled-bird rehabilitation

In 2001, Helene founded, and still operates, the Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre located in Hilden, just outside Truro. It's a registered charity where volunteers care for the animals, but it also receives provincial support. The Centre treats approximately 200 animals per year, accepting all bird species, small mammals, and reptiles. It specialises in raptors, seabirds, and oiled-bird rehabilitation, and is a member of several local organisations which are dedicated to readiness for oiled wildlife both in Atlantic Canada and nationally. It has participated in the successful bird rehabilitation from two major oil spills in the USA and Canada.

Helene's introduction included endearing pictures of rescued baby Pileated Woodpeckers, groundhogs, turtles, and starlings. She told us that when animals are brought to the Centre, she immediately assesses them; if she thinks they will recover naturally, she'll tell the rescuers to release it back where they found it, as that is best for the animal.

Especially interesting was a Blanding's Turtle, over 25 years old. Its feet were bloody and it was in 'bad shape''; it took three months to heal completely enough to be ready for release. Another was a Barred Owl with an injured head from a car hit. They have even used bird puppets to feed some young birds, so that they won't become accustomed to humans which can be dangerous to them after release. The site of release is extremely important; it must be safe, and preferrably it would be the place it was found. There was an Air Canada flight and much paperwork involved in the the rehabilitation of a particular Florida egret; storm-stranded in Toronto with it, Helene had to make special arrangements with the Toronto Zoo for its safety, until the flight could continue on to Halifax.

Lead sinkers used for fishing are a particular problem for birds; swallowing causes fatal lead poisoning, and there is an ongoing programme to ban them.

We have to thank Helene for her wonderful work, and her always engaging and informative talks.

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY 6 NOV.

– Stephanie Robertson

Keith Vaughan has been doing nature photography for many years, and has had over 3,000 acceptances of his work in international competitions. Besides a plethora of breathtaking slides, Keith also brought for us photographer 'wannabees', in a pre-' show-and-tell' segment of his presentation "Nature Where You Find It", some of the most useful and basic equipment that he himself uses for his photo forays.

First, a ubiquitous vest where most of Keth's camera gear is stashed, with myriad pockets for the carrying of, and easy access to, things such as a spare camera battery, rolls of film, memory discs, lens filters, EF extenders (teleconverters), different lenses, the all important 'media pass', a point-and-shoot camera, a reflector, and a hand-held light meter. Then a tripod, and a 28-135 mm lens with image stabilisation (IS). One of Canon's first lenses, it is excellent in low light situations, good for zooming in for a closer shot, and is very easy to detach. He also brought a monster Canon zoom lens on another tripod, a 70-200 mm which cost about $2,000.00 (his royalties paid for this one). This lens is good for wildlife and landscapes.

His Canon camera body, or head, also has video capability, and he had a very good Canon macro lens which he uses for for close-ups. It's a fixed, FL 100 mm - a lens with an extreme range of focus. It will give a 1:1 focus, e.g., one inch:one inch. In Keith's opinion, Canon is the best camera brand. His digital camera body has its own in-built zoom feature, which increases the magnification of the monster zoom even more, which is a great advantage for wildlife and sports shots.

He also brought his equipment-toting bag, and his Tilly hat.

The first image shown was taken at high elevation in Utah – a stunning winter sunrise at -5˚. Upon descent he had to backpack all his winter gear through 50-60˚ temperatures; it was very hot and very hard slogging!

This particular collection of slides was compiled for a nature show that he was invited to present a year after after attending a photographic conference in San Diego.

Keith's wonderful images ranged all over the world – from here in Nova Scotia, (there were some lovely spring shots of our native wildflowers), to the U.K., the U.S., Bavaria, Florida, Colorado, the Canadian Rockies and Jasper and Banff, Wyoming, San Francisco, and Australia (kangaroos, and a pelican with a 12' wingspan!). His last beautiful shots were at Briar Island and Keji; of basalt columns, gulls and gull eggs, puffins, Blue Heron, mushrooms rimed with frost, spiderwebs, wolves, and Red Deer.

A heartfelt thank you, Keith, for the useful gear demonstration and information, and for sharing with us your beautful natural history slides.

FIELD TRIPS

TIDEPOOL TIPTOE – Burkhard Plache

Date: Sunday, September 14th
Place: Martinique Beach
Weather: Overcast
Interpreter: Cathy Fulton
Participants: 7

From Martinique Beach Provincial Park's second parking lot, we all headed off to the rocky headland on the west side of the main beach. The exceptionally low tide of the day allowed easy access to the low-lying parts of the shoreline.

Cathy started us off with an introduction to life in the intertidal zone. Plants and animals inhabiting this environment must be able to survive both in and out of the water, and, during low tide, temperatures can range from below freezing in winter to completely opposite conditions in summer. Furthermore, the salinity of the water in tide pools fluctuates from that of regular seawater which is approx. 3.5% salt. Evaporation will raise the salinity, while precipitation can make it less saline and brackish. Thus, life in the tidal zone requires adaptation to a wide range of conditions.

Approaching the high water mark, the first animals we noticed were Common Periwinkles, *Littorina littorea*, an edible sea snail covering both rocks and sandflats in large numbers. Other less numerous and smaller Periwinkles, the Rough P., *L. saxatilis*, and the Smooth P., *L. obtusata*) were also present. Like the Common Periwinkle, they are algae grazers.

Other animals browsing on the rocks were limpets (unidentified species). Their strong suction makes them hard to dislodge, but when moving, a small gap occurs between the rim of the shell and their skin; they will attach, but are easy to remove. Also firmly attached to the rocks were two filter feeders, Blue Mussels, *Mytilus edulis*, and the crustacean Barnacles, *Balanus* sp. Of the mussels, only small specimens (this years spawn) were observed.

Predators on these are Dog Whelks, a species of sea snail with a shell more pointy and elongated than that of the Periwinkles, and starfish. The former are able to penetrate the shell of their prey (leaving behind an empty shell with a hole); the latter can open mussels by brute force.

In a few tidal ponds, Green Crabs, *Carcinus maenas*, were active. They are distinguished from the Rock Crab, *Cancer irroratus*, by their more triangular shape. Green Crabs are a more recent arrival in Nova Scotian waters; they originated in Europe.

Of 'seaweeds', a number of brown algae were attached to rocks e.g. rockweeds or wracks, *Fucus* sp., or washed ashore (kelps). Rockweeds have typical bladders filled with air, keeping them afloat. Of the kelps, we saw Sea Colander, *Agarum cribrosum*, Horsetail Kelp, and the Common Southern Kelp. The kelp's holdfasts, attaching them to rocks or large Blue or Horse Mussels, *Modiolus modiolus*, provide in turn shelter to smaller critters.

Of Sea Urchins we only found shells; these browse on many types of algae, and in large numbers, unchecked by predation, can cause 'urchin barrens' in the ocean.

Numerous other, typically small species that were difficult to accurately identify were also found, among them: pink seaweed, finger sponge (also called dead man's fingers), and northern coldwater coral.

To summarise: the intertidal zone is a habitat of rich diversity, where the naturalist can easily find many informative samples. Thanks to Cathy Fulton's enthusiasm and knowledge, we left the beach with an increased appreciation for this fascinating part of the ocean.

BOGS AND BARRENS – Brian Ferguson

Date: Saturday, October 4th
Place: Prospect Village
Weather: Sunny and windy
Interpreters: Janet McGinity
Participants: 25

This was a bright, sunny and windy day, and off the coast at Prospect Village white caps glittered. Our group of 25 was led by Janet McGinity, an expert in geology and botany.

Prospect, a fishing village situated within a half-hour drive of Halifax, was settled back in the 1750s. There

are few buildings left from that period. The settlement is magnificently sprawled along the coast situated between barrens and surf-tossed sea.

Janet led us along the beginning of the Indian Pont track which starts in Prospect and meanders for some distance along the coast. This has been designated a protected area. In the distance, suburban development threatens to gradually encroach into this comparatively pristine space.

The flora is typical for this part of the Nova Scotia coast. For example, Janet showed us clusters of bay berries. The small gray berries are used to make scented candles. Regine Maass, who is knowledgeable about plants, particularly mosses, pointed out the spongy masses of peat moss common to this area. There were juniper plants of which there are two kinds – braided, and spiky – names descriptive of their leaf formations, 'spiky' being the most common. The berries were still green. When ripened to a bluish hue, juniper berries are used as flavouring for gin.

This coastal region was formed many eons ago. The glaciated landscaped is strewn with granite boulders (glacial 'erratics') of various shapes and sizes which were carried here by the glaciers and deposited when they melted. These glacial erratics are used for shade by plants such as Lambkill, which appear as green, elongated clusters of leaves nestled snugly in the shadows cast by these rock formations.

Other plants include the moss-like crowberry. Its fruit turns from purple to black when ripe. Bob McDonald observed in the distance a medium-sized shorebird called a Whimbrel which eats crowberries as part of its diet. This area is part of their migration route as they head south for the winter.

Further along the trail were stands of Seaside Goldenrod which have thick waxy leaves in order to conserve water. Other plants include Seaside Plantains which have thin succulent edible leaves.

Bob also spotted a raptor called a Northern Harrier which migrates short distances late in the season. They feed on such rodents as voles and moles.

Cranberries were abundant and ripe for picking. Other plants included stands of Canada Holly with their bright scarlet berries, and Labrador Tea with miniature white blossoms and tough, thick, waxy leaves for water conservation. We also saw a small cluster of Pitcher Plants near an abandoned anthill, and there were isolated stands of hardy conifers bent over and shaped by the wind into tuckamore. Patches of Wintergreen stood out; their leaves make a mint-flavoured tea when boiled.

Regine pointed out a patch of Poison Ivy which I almost stepped into! With their reddish brown leaves they looked fairly innocuous.

Bob spied some Double-crested Cormorants sheltering from the wind behind some offshore rocks. There was some noticeable erosion along parts of this trail, with the sea lapping just below us.

Before starting back we stopped on the lea of a huge granite rock formation out of the cold wind for a lunch break. In the distance Prospect Village glimmered beneath a cobalt blue sky. Off the coast nearby here was where the White Star liner Atlantic was shipwrecked one night in very heavy seas with loss of life.

On the side of a granite rock facing us were inscribed words commemorating another shipwreck "Phantome Brig Sank in Storm off This Shore Nov. 24, 1814". Fortunately, in this case, all were saved.

Many thanks to Janet McGinty for sharing her knowledge of this beautiful area with us, and to Burkhard and Ingrid Plache for organising the hike.

McINTOSH RUN

– Burkhard & Ingrid Plache

Date: Saturday, November 8th
Place: McIntosh Run, Spryfield
Weather: Overcast, some sun; later – fog
Interpreters: Kaarin Tae and John Brazner
Participants: 20

We met at the Roach Pond Park parking lot, approximately 2 km south of central Spryfield, on Herring Cove Road. The trail begins at the parking lot, runs first along Roach Pond and then crosses a small ridge, after which it meets the MacIntosh run, and then continues for the remainder of the trail along the stream.

Within HRM, the walk offers the unique experience of walking along a stream with a feeling of being in the wilderness. Even though the forest is in parts quite young, along the stream a mixture of mature and young trees is evident. For a city stream, the water quality is quite high, with trout present and traces of beaver visible in many places. The effects of past windstorms were still visible: trees had been uprooted and were still partially blocking the flow, thus adding organic material and creating important fish habitat. Kaarin had brought a net for catching freshwater crustaceans, of which we saw a number of species.

The future of this hidden treasure in the midst of Spryfield is, however, not secured: residential developments are planned on parts of both sides of the stream, and threaten to diminish its ecological and recreational value.

The trail is currently not an official HRM trail since it does not meet their safety standards. The McIntosh Run Community Group, which was instrumental in bringing the trail into its current state, is working to establish it as an official trail. There is a further vision to extend the current trail as a wilderness trail, which would follow the run further downstream, reaching Herring Cove. These exciting developments, however, are contingent on the collaboration of a few land owners.

The McIntosh Run Community Group meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Capt. William Spry Center. Everyone who is interested in the future of the McIntosh Run and the trail system is welcome to attend the meetings.

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.

"The northern people are happy when snow lies heavy on the land. They welcome the first snow in autumn, and often regret its passing in the spring. Snow is their friend. Without it they would have perished or – almost worse from their point of view – they would long since have been driven south to join us in our frenetic rush to wherever it is that we are bound."..

– Farley Mowat, "Snow" in The Snow Walker (1975)

NATURAL EVENTS

1 Dec. The waxing crescent Moon will form a trio with Venus and Jupiter between 17:30 and 19:30 AST.
7 Dec. Daily average temperature goes below 0˚.
8-10 Dec. Earliest sunset of the year, at 16:34.
12 Dec. Full Moon rises at 16:18.
12 Dec. Moon is at Perigee; large tides will follow for the next two days.
13/14 Dec. Geminid Meteor Shower.
14 Dec. -5 Jan. Audubon Christmas Bird Count Period.
21 Dec. Winter Solstice at 8:01: Winter begins in the Northern Hemisphere; but, though the temperature drops, the days begin to lengthen.
26-31 Dec. Latest sunrise of the year at 7:51.
7 Jan. Daily maximum temperature at Shearwater goes below 0˚.
11 Jan. Full Moon. Moonrise at 14:27.
13-24 Jan. 'January Thaw' (the temperature stops falling, and the average actually rises 0.2˚).
24/25Jan -7/8 Feb. 'Eagle Days' in Sheffield Mills, King's County; three weekends of organised events.
6-8 Feb. Coldest days of winter (average daily minimum -9.4˚).
9 Feb. Average temperatures start increasing.
19 Feb. Fifth anniversary of "White Juan", the record-breaking snowfall in 2003.
9 Feb. Full Moon. Moonrise at 15:39.
22 Feb. Daily maximum temperature rises above 0˚.
8 Mar. Daylight Saving Time (ADT) begins at 2:00 AST: turn clocks ahead one hour.
11 Mar. Full Moon. Moonrise at 18:19 ADT.
20 Mar. Vernal Equinox at 10:48: Spring begins in the Northern hemisphere.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON WINTER AND EARLY SPRING SATURDAYS, HALIFAX W 63 36, N 044 39

6 Dec.	7:37	16:35	**3 Jan.**	7:51	16:47
13 Dec.	7:43	16:35	**10 Jan.**	7:50	16:54
20 Dec.	7:48	16:37	**17 Jan.**	7:47	17:03
27 Dec.	7:51	16:41	**24 Jan.**	7:41	17:12
			31 Jan.	7:34	17:22
7 Feb.	7:26	17:32	**7 Mar.**	6:41	18:10
14 Feb.	7:16	17:42	**14 Mar.**	7:28	19:19
21 Feb.	7:05	17:52	**21 Mar.**	7:15	19:28
28 Feb.	6:53	18:01	**28 Mar.**	7:02	19:37

– Sources: Atmospheric Environment Service, Climate Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.; Blomidon Naturalists Society's 2008 Calendar; United States Naval Observatory Data Services.

ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

Astronomy Nova Scotia: International Year of Astronomy, N.S. Opening Celebration, Jan. 7th-13th, **www.astronomynovascotia.ca/**.

7 Jan. "Astronomers on the Radio", a CBC Maritime Noon phone-in.
9 Jan. "Astronomers Drinking Coffee – Where are the Aliens?", a 'café scientifique', Uncommon Grounds, S. Park St.
10 Jan. "Astronomy Display", Mic Mac Mall; StarLab shows for Kids, Discovery Centre; Public Astronomy Lectures, SMU and Acadia; Sidewalk Astronomy, SMU; Tour of Burke-Gaffney Observatory, SMU.
11 Jan. Public Sky Shows at the Halifax Planetarium (Dal), StarLab shows for Kids at the Discovery Centre.
13 Jan. Astronomers at the Spring Garden Road Library: "Gravity and Black Holes", **www.astronomynovascotia.ca/**.

Blomidon Naturalists Society: Indoor meetings take place on the 3rd Mon. of the month, in the Beveridge Arts Centre Auditorium, Room BAC241, Acadia U., Highland Ave., Wolfville, 7:30 p.m. Field trips usually depart from the waterfront, Front St., Wolfville. For more information, go to **www.blomidonnaturalists.ca/**.

28 Dec. "West Hants Christmas Bird Count", with compiler Patrick Kelly, 798–3329, **patrick.kelly@dal.ca**.
19 Jan. "Annual Show and Tell Night". Slides, pictures, specimens, collections, fossils, videos, computer stuff, favourite books ... anything that might interest fellow naturalists.
2 Feb. "Winter on Snowshoes", with leader Soren Bondrup-Neilsen, 582-3971.
16 Feb. "Ticks", with speaker Jeff Ogden, DNR entomologist.
21 Feb. "Orchid Show" at the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre at Acadia University
2 Mar. "Between Forest and Sky", with speaker Sharon Stratton, Alberta Sustainable Resources fire-tower observer.
16 Mar. "Museum Hopping: Using Biological Collections to Understand Mammalian Biology and Diversity" with Howie Huynh, Acadia grad student.
20 Mar. "The Role of Turbine Characteristics in the Impact of Tidal Power Generation on Pelagic Marine Organisms", with speaker Dr. Mike Dadswell, Acadia University.

Burke-Gaffney Observatory: Public shows at the Burke-Gaffney Observatory at Saint Mary's University are held on the 1st and 3rd Sat. of each month, except from Jun. through Sept., when they are held every Sat. Tours begin at 7:00 p.m. between Nov. 1st and Mar. 30th, and at either 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. (depending on when it gets dark) between Apr. 1st and Oct. 31st. For more information, 496-8257; **apwww.stmarys.ca/bgo/**.

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

11 Jan. "Sewer Stroll I – Halifax/Dartmouth Area", with leader Bob McDonald, 443-5051, **bobathome@hfx.eastlink.ca**.
18 Jan. "Beginning Birders Trip- Winter Birds of Pt. Pl's'nt Park", with leader Sue Abbott, 222-2880, **sabbott@bsc-eoc.org**.
22 Jan. "Members' Photo Night".
31 Jan. "Beginning Birders Trip – Lunenburg", with leader James Hirtle, 766-4642, **jrhbirder@hotmail.com**.
8 Feb. "HRM Harbour Hop", with leaders Suzanne Borkowski 445-2922, **suzanneborkowski@yahoo.ca**, and Bob McDonald, 443-5051, **bobathome@hfx.eastlink.ca**.
26 Feb. "Stamping Out Birds", with speaker Patrick Kelly.
7 Mar. "Valley Birding", with leader Bernard Forsythe, 542-2427.
14 Mar. "Beginning Birders Trip – Halifax", with leaders Bonnie Carmichael, 477-9945, **bonniecarmichael@hotmail.com**, and Gail Bruhm, **gcbruhm@ns.sympatico.ca**. **Pre-Registration is necessary!**
21 Mar. "Along the Fundy Shore", with leader Wayne Neily, 765-2455, **neilyornis@hotmail.com**.
26 Mar. "Why Bird Migration in Nova Scotia is So Interesting", with speaker Dr. Ian McLaren.
28 Mar. "Baccaro & Blanche Peninsula", with leader Donna Ensor, 875-4269, **smokeytow@yahoo.ca**.
4 Apr. "Martinique Beach", with leader Ian McLaren, 429-7024, **iamclar@dal.ca**.

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

28 Jan. "Cape Chignecto: Nova Scotia's 'West Coast' Trail", with Gerry Lunn, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.
1 Feb. -31 May "Ice Age Mammals".
11 Feb. "Secrets in Your Backyard Boulders", with Dr. John Gosse, Earth Sciences, Dalhousie University.
25 Feb. "Endangered Moose of Mainland Nova Scotia" with Sarah Spencer and Tony Nette, D.N.R.
TBA Apr. "Salamander Meander". **Pre-registration required starting Mar. 2nd**. Call 424-3563.
1 Apr. "Discovering Arctic Alpine Shorebirds in Beringia", with Laurel McIvor, Curator of Interpretation.
15 Apr. "Ice Age to Climate Change: A Natural History of the Shubenacadie Waterway", with Dr. Edward King, Geological Survey of Canada (Atlantic).

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society: Meets 4th Mon. of the month, Sept. to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information phone Heather Drope (423-7032), or go to **www.nswildflora.ca/**.

26 Jan. "Members' Slide Night". Contact Heather Drope, 423-7032.
23 Feb. "Identification and Ecology of Sedges", with Tyler Smith, Postdoctoral Fellow, Biology, SMU.
23 Mar. "Wildflowers of E. Texas and Lost Pines", with Dr. Phil Schappert, of the Stengl Lost Pines Biological Station.
27 Apr. AGM and "Alpine Flowers of the Swiss Alps", with speaker Shirley McIntyre.

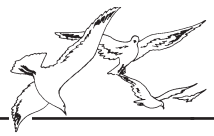
Nova Scotian Institute of Science: Meets 1st Mon. of the month, Sept. to Apr., usually at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information, **www.chebucto.ns.ca/Science/NSIS/index.html**.

5 Jan. "Uranium and Gold extraction; can it be done safely in Nova Scotia?", with Marcos Zentilli, Michael Parsons, Paul Smith, and Marc Lamoureux.
2 Mar. "Research at the top of the world – the changing climate and the International Polar Year", with Glen Lesins.
6 Apr. "To be a bee or not to be – threats to pollinators and consequences in Nova Scotia", with Dick Rogers.

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

– compiled by Patricia L. Chalmers

HALIFAX TIDE TABLE



January-janvier

Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres
1	0459	**2.3**	0.7	**16**	0638	**1.3**	0.4
	1046	**5.6**	1.7		1149	**5.6**	1.7
TH	1716	**1.3**	0.4	FR	1842	**1.0**	0.3
JE	2325	**5.6**	1.7	VE			
2	0549	**2.3**	0.7	**17**	0018	**5.9**	1.8
	1125	**5.2**	1.6		0733	**1.3**	0.4
FR	1758	**1.3**	0.4	SA	1238	**4.9**	1.5
VE				SA	1935	**1.6**	0.5
3	0002	**5.6**	1.7	**18**	0104	**5.6**	1.7
	0643	**2.0**	0.6		0827	**1.3**	0.4
SA	1209	**5.2**	1.6	SU	1331	**4.6**	1.4
SA	1844	**1.6**	0.5	DI	2029	**2.0**	0.6
4	0042	**5.6**	1.7	**19**	0156	**5.2**	1.6
	0738	**2.0**	0.6		0920	**1.6**	0.5
SU	1259	**4.9**	1.5	MO	1434	**4.6**	1.4
DI	1935	**1.6**	0.5	LU	2126	**2.0**	0.6
5	0128	**5.6**	1.7	**20**	0254	**5.2**	1.6
	0835	**1.6**	0.5		1012	**1.6**	0.5
MO	1359	**4.9**	1.5	TU	1548	**4.6**	1.4
LU	2031	**2.0**	0.6	MA	2224	**2.3**	0.7
6	0222	**5.6**	1.7	**21**	0358	**4.9**	1.5
	0934	**1.3**	0.4		1104	**1.3**	0.4
TU	1509	**4.9**	1.5	WE	1659	**4.6**	1.4
MA	2131	**2.0**	0.6	ME	2321	**2.3**	0.7
7	0325	**5.9**	1.8	**22**	0458	**5.2**	1.6
	1034	**1.0**	0.3		1152	**1.3**	0.4
WE	1622	**4.9**	1.5	TH	1756	**4.9**	1.5
ME	2235	**1.6**	0.5	JE			
8	0430	**5.9**	1.8	**23**	0011	**2.3**	0.7
	1135	**0.7**	0.2		0551	**5.2**	1.6
TH	1730	**5.2**	1.6	FR	1238	**1.3**	0.4
JE	2341	**1.6**	0.5	VE	1844	**4.9**	1.5
9	0535	**6.2**	1.9	**24**	0052	**2.3**	0.7
	1235	**0.3**	0.1		0636	**5.6**	1.7
FR	1832	**5.6**	1.7	SA	1318	**1.0**	0.3
VE				SA	1925	**5.2**	1.6
10	0045	**1.3**	0.4	**25**	0127	**2.0**	0.6
	0636	**6.6**	2.0		0717	**5.6**	1.7
SA	1332	**0.0**	0.0	SU	1355	**1.0**	0.3
SA	1930	**5.9**	1.8	DI	2002	**5.2**	1.6
11	0147	**1.3**	0.4	**26**	0159	**2.0**	0.6
	0735	**6.6**	2.0		0756	**5.9**	1.8
SU	1427	**0.0**	0.0	MO	1429	**1.0**	0.3
DI	2025	**6.2**	1.9	LU	2037	**5.2**	1.6
12	0246	**1.0**	0.3	**27**	0233	**2.0**	0.6
	0830	**6.6**	2.0		0834	**5.9**	1.8
MO	1519	**0.0**	0.0	TU	1502	**1.0**	0.3
LU	2117	**6.2**	1.9	MA	2111	**5.6**	1.7
13	0345	**1.0**	0.3	**28**	0309	**1.6**	0.5
	0923	**6.6**	2.0		0910	**5.9**	1.8
TU	1609	**0.0**	0.0	WE	1534	**1.0**	0.3
MA	2205	**6.2**	1.9	ME	2144	**5.6**	1.7
14	0444	**1.0**	0.3	**29**	0348	**1.6**	0.5
	1013	**6.2**	1.9		0946	**5.9**	1.8
WE	1659	**0.3**	0.1	TH	1608	**1.0**	0.3
ME	2251	**6.2**	1.9	JE	2217	**5.6**	1.7
15	0541	**1.3**	0.4	**30**	0431	**1.6**	0.5
	1101	**5.9**	1.8		1023	**5.6**	1.7
TH	1751	**0.7**	0.2	FR	1643	**1.0**	0.3
JE	2335	**6.2**	1.9	VE	2251	**5.9**	1.8
				31	0518	**1.6**	0.5
					1102	**5.6**	1.7
				SA	1723	**1.3**	0.4
				SA	2326	**5.6**	1.7

February-février

Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres
1	0610	**1.6**	0.5	**16**	0023	**5.6**	1.7
	1144	**5.2**	1.6		0744	**1.6**	0.5
SU	1811	**1.6**	0.5	MO	1253	**4.6**	1.4
DI				LU	1949	**2.0**	0.6
2	0006	**5.6**	1.7	**17**	0111	**5.2**	1.6
	0707	**1.6**	0.5		0837	**1.6**	0.5
MO	1232	**4.9**	1.5	TU	1350	**4.6**	1.4
LU	1907	**2.0**	0.6	MA	2049	**2.3**	0.7
3	0052	**5.6**	1.7	**18**	0209	**4.9**	1.5
	0808	**1.3**	0.4		0930	**1.6**	0.5
TU	1329	**4.9**	1.5	WE	1505	**4.6**	1.4
MA	2011	**2.0**	0.6	ME	2149	**2.3**	0.7
4	0148	**5.6**	1.7	**19**	0320	**4.9**	1.5
	0912	**1.3**	0.4		1023	**1.6**	0.5
WE	1438	**4.9**	1.5	TH	1628	**4.6**	1.4
ME	2118	**2.0**	0.6	JE	2245	**2.3**	0.7
5	0256	**5.6**	1.7	**20**	0431	**4.9**	1.5
	1016	**1.0**	0.3		1115	**1.6**	0.5
TH	1600	**4.9**	1.5	FR	1731	**4.9**	1.5
JE	2226	**2.0**	0.6	VE	2335	**2.3**	0.7
6	0412	**5.9**	1.8	**21**	0527	**5.2**	1.6
	1120	**0.7**	0.2		1202	**1.3**	0.4
FR	1718	**5.2**	1.6	SA	1817	**4.9**	1.5
VE	2333	**1.6**	0.5	SA			
7	0524	**6.2**	1.9	**22**	0016	**2.3**	0.7
	1221	**0.3**	0.1		0612	**5.6**	1.7
SA	1822	**5.6**	1.7	SU	1245	**1.3**	0.4
SA				DI	1856	**5.2**	1.6
8	0037	**1.3**	0.4	**23**	0054	**2.0**	0.6
	0628	**6.2**	1.9		0652	**5.6**	1.7
SU	1316	**0.3**	0.1	MO	1322	**1.0**	0.3
DI	1917	**5.9**	1.8	LU	1931	**5.2**	1.6
9	0137	**1.0**	0.3	**24**	0129	**1.6**	0.5
	0724	**6.6**	2.0		0730	**5.9**	1.8
MO	1408	**0.0**	0.0	TU	1356	**0.7**	0.2
LU	2007	**6.2**	1.9	MA	2004	**5.6**	1.7
10	0233	**1.0**	0.3	**25**	0206	**1.3**	0.4
	0816	**6.6**	2.0		0807	**5.9**	1.8
TU	1456	**0.0**	0.0	WE	1429	**0.7**	0.2
MA	2054	**6.6**	2.0	ME	2036	**5.6**	1.7
11	0327	**1.0**	0.3	**26**	0245	**1.3**	0.4
	0905	**6.2**	1.9		0844	**5.9**	1.8
WE	1543	**0.3**	0.1	TH	1502	**0.7**	0.2
ME	2138	**6.6**	2.0	JE	2109	**5.9**	1.8
12	0418	**1.0**	0.3	**27**	0325	**1.0**	0.3
	0951	**6.2**	1.9		0922	**5.6**	1.7
TH	1628	**0.7**	0.2	FR	1536	**1.0**	0.3
JE	2219	**6.2**	1.9	VE	2143	**5.9**	1.8
13	0509	**1.0**	0.3	**28**	0407	**1.0**	0.3
	1036	**5.9**	1.8		1000	**5.6**	1.7
FR	1714	**1.0**	0.3	SA	1613	**1.0**	0.3
VE	2259	**6.2**	1.9	SA	2218	**5.9**	1.8
14	0559	**1.3**	0.4				
	1120	**5.2**	1.6				
SA	1801	**1.3**	0.4				
SA	2339	**5.9**	1.8				
15	0651	**1.3**	0.4				
	1204	**4.9**	1.5				
SU	1852	**2.0**	0.6				
DI							

March-mars

Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres
1	0454	**1.0**	0.3	**16**	0605	**1.3**	0.4
	1041	**5.6**	1.7		1134	**5.2**	1.6
SU	1656	**1.3**	0.4	MO	1809	**2.3**	0.7
DI	2256	**5.9**	1.8	LU	2345	**5.6**	1.7
2	0547	**1.0**	0.3	**17**	0655	**1.6**	0.5
	1124	**5.2**	1.6		1220	**4.9**	1.5
MO	1751	**1.6**	0.5	TU	1908	**2.3**	0.7
LU	2339	**5.6**	1.7	MA			
3	0648	**1.3**	0.4	**18**	0032	**5.2**	1.6
	1213	**5.2**	1.6		0747	**2.0**	0.6
TU	1857	**2.0**	0.6	WE	1313	**4.6**	1.4
MA				ME	2011	**2.6**	0.8
4	0028	**5.6**	1.7	**19**	0127	**4.9**	1.5
	0753	**1.3**	0.4		0841	**2.0**	0.6
WE	1310	**4.9**	1.5	TH	1422	**4.6**	1.4
ME	2007	**2.0**	0.6	JE	2110	**2.6**	0.8
5	0127	**5.6**	1.7	**20**	0237	**4.9**	1.5
	0859	**1.3**	0.4		0934	**2.0**	0.6
TH	1422	**4.6**	1.4	FR	1548	**4.6**	1.4
JE	2116	**2.0**	0.6	VE	2204	**2.6**	0.8
6	0240	**5.6**	1.7	**21**	0353	**4.9**	1.5
	1003	**1.0**	0.3		1026	**2.0**	0.6
FR	1554	**4.9**	1.5	SA	1655	**4.9**	1.5
VE	2223	**2.0**	0.6	SA	2253	**2.3**	0.7
7	0404	**5.6**	1.7	**22**	0453	**4.9**	1.5
	1106	**1.0**	0.3		1115	**1.6**	0.5
SA	1712	**5.2**	1.6	SU	1741	**5.2**	1.6
SA	2328	**1.6**	0.5	DI	2338	**2.3**	0.7
8	0518	**5.9**	1.8	**23**	0540	**5.2**	1.6
	1204	**0.7**	0.2		1159	**1.3**	0.4
SU	1809	**5.6**	1.7	MO	1818	**5.2**	1.6
DI				LU			
9	0029	**1.3**	0.4	**24**	0020	**2.0**	0.6
	0618	**6.2**	1.9		0621	**5.6**	1.7
MO	1257	**0.3**	0.1	TU	1240	**1.0**	0.3
LU	1858	**6.2**	1.9	MA	1852	**5.6**	1.7
10	0125	**1.0**	0.3	**25**	0100	**1.3**	0.4
	0710	**6.2**	1.9		0701	**5.6**	1.7
TU	1346	**0.3**	0.1	WE	1317	**1.0**	0.3
MA	1942	**6.2**	1.9	ME	1924	**5.6**	1.7
11	0216	**0.7**	0.2	**26**	0141	**1.0**	0.3
	0758	**6.2**	1.9		0740	**5.6**	1.7
WE	1432	**0.3**	0.1	TH	1353	**0.7**	0.2
ME	2024	**6.6**	2.0	JE	1957	**5.9**	1.8
12	0304	**0.7**	0.2	**27**	0222	**0.7**	0.2
	0843	**6.2**	1.9		0819	**5.6**	1.7
TH	1515	**0.7**	0.2	FR	1430	**0.7**	0.2
JE	2105	**6.6**	2.0	VE	2033	**5.9**	1.8
13	0349	**0.7**	0.2	**28**	0304	**0.7**	0.2
	0927	**5.9**	1.8		0859	**5.6**	1.7
FR	1556	**1.0**	0.3	SA	1508	**1.0**	0.3
VE	2144	**6.2**	1.9	SA	2110	**6.2**	1.9
14	0433	**1.0**	0.3	**29**	0348	**0.7**	0.2
	1010	**5.6**	1.7		0941	**5.6**	1.7
SA	1636	**1.3**	0.4	SU	1552	**1.0**	0.3
SA	2223	**5.9**	1.8	DI	2150	**5.9**	1.8
15	0518	**1.0**	0.3	**30**	0438	**0.7**	0.2
	1052	**5.2**	1.6		1024	**5.6**	1.7
SU	1718	**2.0**	0.6	MO	1643	**1.3**	0.4
DI	2303	**5.9**	1.8	LU	2234	**5.9**	1.8
				31	0535	**0.7**	0.2
					1111	**5.2**	1.6
				TU	1748	**1.6**	0.5
				MA	2321	**5.9**	1.8

ALL TIMES ARE AST

Nature Notes

November

Allan Robertson said that his compost bin was absolutely loaded with **mosquitoes**! Lesley Butters reported that the waters of the Northwest Arm were particularly clear. She could see right down into the bottom; for the very first time, she observed myriads of **Razor Clams** along the shoreline. She wondered why this was a first observation in a well-frequented spot for her. Was it a cyclical phenomena?

Pat Leader has seen **Coltsfoot** in bloom in the past week! Someone reported dug-up turf in their lawn; Janet Dalton surmised that **Raccoons** might have been responsible. Regine Maass had brought in a large, deep, brown bird's nest, made entirely of brown carpet underlay which they had put outside for garden mulch; the birds had took advantage of the bounty of nesting material.

Helen Smith had brought with her a very large and interesting rose gall. Jim Medill reported many more than usual **Coyotes** in the White Hills, Hammond's Plains area. There had previously been a plethora of **Hares** over the past two years; their population has been decimated by the Coyotes.

Charles Crohn reported sighting **many deer** around Purcell's Cove Road; he sighted also **a large buck**, which was very unusual. Judy Keating reported hearing snorting and growling near her place; deer were the proposed culprits. David Patriquin observed lots of die-back of old-growth **Jack Pine and White Pine** in and around Susie's Lake. Lesley Butters reported on this year's scourge of **Norway Maple leaf 'tar-spot'** disease. There was one **Canada Goose** on her property in St. Margaret's Bay. Ray Provencer reported a **White-breasted Goose** on Ashburn Golf Course.

–Stephanie Robertson

December

Many of the observations were of bird sightings, particularly interesting in dreary winter. Some species were new arrivals from further north, for whom this is 'south'; some were lingering birds which should have migrated by now; and others were unexpected strays.

Patricia Chalmers reported that five species of **warblers have been attracting birders to Point Pleasant Park: Black-and-white, Orange-crowned, Palm, Pine, and Hermit Warbler.** While the first four are eastern species which occur regularly here in the fall, with some individuals lingering into early winter, the fifth is a real rarity. The Hermit Warbler's normal range is in the Pacific Southwest, in the Cascade Mountains, and it should be in Mexico by now. These birds are congregating along the pine-bordered road near the lower parking lot.

Verna Higgins has an immature **male Rose-breasted Grosbeak** coming to her feeder. Wayne Neily reported that he had seen a **Nashville Warbler** today in Point Pleasant Park, making a sixth warbler species! Peter Webster mentioned an article in today's Chronicle Herald regarding the reintroduction of **Pine Marten** to certain areas in Cape Breton. The animals are trapped in northern New Brunswick for release here.

The Nova Scotia Bird Society has organised a friendly 'winter birding' competition, to see how many birds within HRM a team can see. Bob McDonald and Suzanne Borkowski are taking part, and Bob encouraged others to join. Lillian Risley reported that she saw a **Common Yellowthroat** in her backyard recently. The first botanical observation came from Pat Leader, who remarked that **Common Dandelion and Tansy** could still be found in bloom!

A large number of **slugs** have been climbing one of the maple trees in Regina Maass's Jollimore garden, and she wondered why they were doing that. Lesley Butters, who keeps a lookout over the North West Arm from her Waegwoltic haunts, reported last month on the abundance of **Razor Clams** on the surface waters of the Arm. However she has not seen any in the last three weeks, and wondered if she had observed an incident in their life cycle. No explanations were forthcoming.

– Patricia Chalmers

HUNTING SEASON

Ruffed Grouse	Oct. 1st to Dec. 31st, excluding Sundays
Rabbit (Snowshoe Hare)	Nov. 1st to the last day of Feb., excluding Sundays

! REMEMBER, IT'S HUNTING SEASON, SO DRESS TO BE SEEN IN THE WOODS !

NEXT DEADLINE

21st of February for the March Issue
Send contributions to 'Newsletter', c/o NS Museum of Natural History, or email submissions to sdhaythorn@ns.sympatico.ca