

THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST



No. 137
December, 2009 to March, 2010

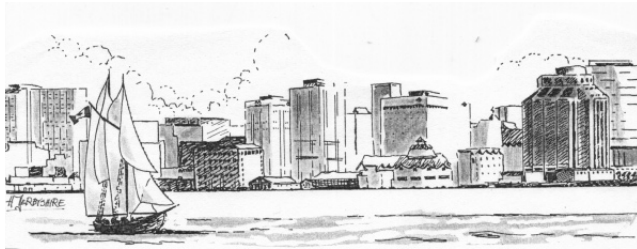


In This Issue.....	2	HFN Field Trips	7
News & Announcements.....	3	YNC Field Trips	10
Special Reports.....	4	Nature Notes	12
HFN Talks	5	Almanac	13
Hfx Tide Table: January to March.....		15	

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 Nova Scotia (Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists), the provincial umbrella association for naturalist groups in Nova Scotia. **Objectives** are to encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history, both within the membership of HFN and in the public at large, 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.



IN THIS ISSUE

HFN News & Announcements	3
Editorial	
Blue Mountain/Birch Cove - at risk again	
Special Reports	4
Bedford Waterfront - a history of recent developments.....	
HFN Talks	5
Biology Adventures - a life's vocation	
Life at the Poles - smelly penguins and other delights	6
Field Trips	7
Purcell's Cove Lands - a lichens species list	
Long Lake Prov. Park - mountain bikes & beavers	
Bhutan - GNH; a Crane, a Heron, & an Ibisbill	
YNC Field Trips	10
McNab's Island - two reports	
Nature Notes	12
October - fox, grouse, bears, ants, slugs, orchids	
November - pheasants, doves, owls, butterflies, ravens	

GRAPHICS All uncredited illustrations are by H. Derbyshire or from copyright-free sources. **Front Cover** - Bob McDonald; **Back Cover** - David Patriquin; **p. 7 & 8** - Lichens, M. Hale; **p. 9** - Beaver, Geoffrey Goss; Black-necked Crane, Jennifer L. Moores; **p. 10** - White-bellied Heron & Ibisbill, Jennifer L. Moores; **Tide Table** - Canadian Hydrographic Service, Fisheries & Oceans Canada.

HFN ADDRESS

Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6
Website: www.halifaxfieldnaturalists.ca

NNS ADDRESS

Nature Nova Scotia, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 3A6
Email: doug@fundymud.com (Doug Linzey, FNSN Secretary and Newsletter Editor)
Website: naturens.ca

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Vice-President	Peter Webster.....453-9244
Treasurer	Janet Dalton.....443-7617
Secretary	Richard Beazley.....429-6626
Past President	Allan Robertson.....422-6326
Directors	Grace Beazley, Jim Medill, Bob McDonald, Burkhard Plache, Ingrid Plache, Lillian Risley, Stephanie Robertson

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Membership Programme	Lillian Risley.....422-8652
Talks/Trips	Burkhard & Ingrid Plache.....475-1129
	Bob & Wendy McDonald.....443-5051
	Jim Medill.....405-7446
	Stephanie Robertson.....422-6326
Design	
Newsletter	
Editor	Stephanie Robertson.....422-6326
Design	Stephanie Robertson.....422-6326
Almanac	Patricia Chalmers.....422-3970
Taxonomy	Ursula Grigg.....681-1264
Distribution	Bernice Moores.....422-5292
Labels	Doug Linzey.....582-7176
Tea Break	Regine Maass
Conservation	Peter Webster.....453-9244
	Bob McDonald.....443-5051
	Peter Webster.....453-9244
NNS Rep.	Brian Bartlett.....420-0315
YNC Rep.	Jim Medill.....405-7446
PSAs	David Patriquin.....423-5716
Web Design	

FEES

2009/2010	
Student	\$15.00 per year
Individual	\$20.00 per year
Family	\$25.00 per year
Supporting	\$30.00 per year
Nature NS (opt.)	\$5.00 per year

December - coyote, seals, mergansers, cranes, asters.....	
Hunting Season - dates for prey species.....	
Almanac	13
Natural Events	
Dates of important seasonal phenomena	
Organisational Events	
Blom. Nat. Society - frolics; eagles; snowshoes	
Burke Gaffney Observatory - 1st & 3rd Saturdays	14
Mar. Mus. of Atlantic - Wildlife Photo Contest	
N.S. Bird Society - new birders' walks; wild bird release ...	
N.S. Mus. of Nat. Hist. - galleries closed 'til new year	
N.S. Nature Trust - Annual Dinner/Silent Auction	
N.S. Wild Flora Society - twig ident.; Jamaica plants	
N.S. Inst. of Science - land protection; reptiles	
Royal Astronomical Society - 3rd Fri. each month	
Sable I. Green Horse Society - Sable Island update	
Halifax Tide Table	15
January to March; all times are AST	

HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL



– S. Robertson

At our last monthly meeting on December 3rd, I was exhorted to talk more about the weather in my editorials. This was related to several 'Nature Notes' comments about late bloomings, late sightings of birds, insects, etc., related to 'global warming'. Well, I feel that I *do* talk about the weather, rather too much in fact, as it directly affects our naturalists' activities.

Several years ago there was a wonderful feature on Eastlink Cable TV. One of the channels played CBC 2 music, while the screen showed a continuous run of weather facts, both present and historical. I always found this very useful for putting weather thoughts in a greater perspective, especially with those who were often wont to exclaim dramatically "Isn't the weather very unusual for this time of year?" – they could hardly believe the conditions of the moment. Well, for one thing, we have the very large Atlantic to the east and south which plays a big role in the fickleness of our Nova Scotia climate, not only moderating it, but also causing, at times, high winds, extreme and rapid drops and rises in temperature, destructive hurricanes, excessive precipitation, etc. Sadly, Eastlink dropped this useful channel quite awhile ago.

But, having just talked with an old friend, a retired Nova Scotia meteorologist, I've learned this service still exists, and what's more, it's new and improved, taking advantage of all the possibilities the internet has to offer website designers. The site is **weatheroffice.gc.ca** with your search engine of choice. You'll get to **Weather – Environment Canada**. Click on the title of the site, and a Canadian map will appear; click on 'Halifax' and you'll get the current conditions and the week's forecast, with a choice up on the right of plain 'Halifax', or 'Halifax (Shearwater)'. More interestingly, at the bottom, you'll see a 'Historical Data' button below the written forecast (as opposed to the graphic one at the top). On the same line, to the right, click 'More Info', picking 'Record Values'.

For instance, today, 12 noon, Thursday, December 17th, it's -13°C at Shearwater, but the record low for today was -17.2 in 1970, with the record high being +14.4°C in 1973! I wonder what flowers were blooming still then, what birds lingering behind, what insects still flitting about...

On the left of the main site is the usual list of choices for different types of information. The 'Radar/Satellite' choice (pick 'radar') will give you five or six changing images representing an hour's worth of weather, after clicking on the 'play' button.

Another good site to visit is **NASA Satellite**; click on **Interactive Weather Satellite Imagery Viewers from NASA GHCC**. Click on '1 km visible', and under the map of North America click on 'Animation', pick Nova Scotia, and you'll also see five or six changing images of cloud cover movements, representing an hour's worth of activity as well.

Both these sites are fun to play around in, but my favourite feature is still the historical records on **Weather – Environment Canada**; with that you can research the weather for any day from 1953 onwards! Under the 'More Info' button, choose 'Historical Records'. Here, you'll find much more detailed weather data for each day of the month.

CONSERVATION



BLUE MOUNTAIN/ BIRCH COVE LAKES

The Halifax Regional Municipality appears to be backing away from its promise to protect the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes wilderness, near Halifax, as a regional wilderness park. Your help is urgently needed.

In 2006, the Halifax Regional Municipality passed a 25-year regional plan to guide future development in the city and to identify green space for the citizens of Halifax. That plan identifies the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes wilderness as a prime site for a new regional park and states that the city will work over time to acquire those lands for conservation. The area is significant for its vast forests, interconnected lakes, and recreational opportunities only 10km from downtown Halifax. It also contains rare arctic-alpine plants and habitat for the endangered mainland moose.

Now, a development proposal is making its way through City Hall proposing high- and medium-density residential and commercial development for these same lands. Please take a moment to let Mayor Peter Kelly know how you feel.

In your submission, you may want to remind the mayor that the regional plan identifies Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes as a site for a future wilderness park and what's at stake is the integrity of the entire regional plan. Earlier this year, the provincial government designated Crown lands in the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes region as a protected wilderness area. The City needs to keep up its end of the bargain.

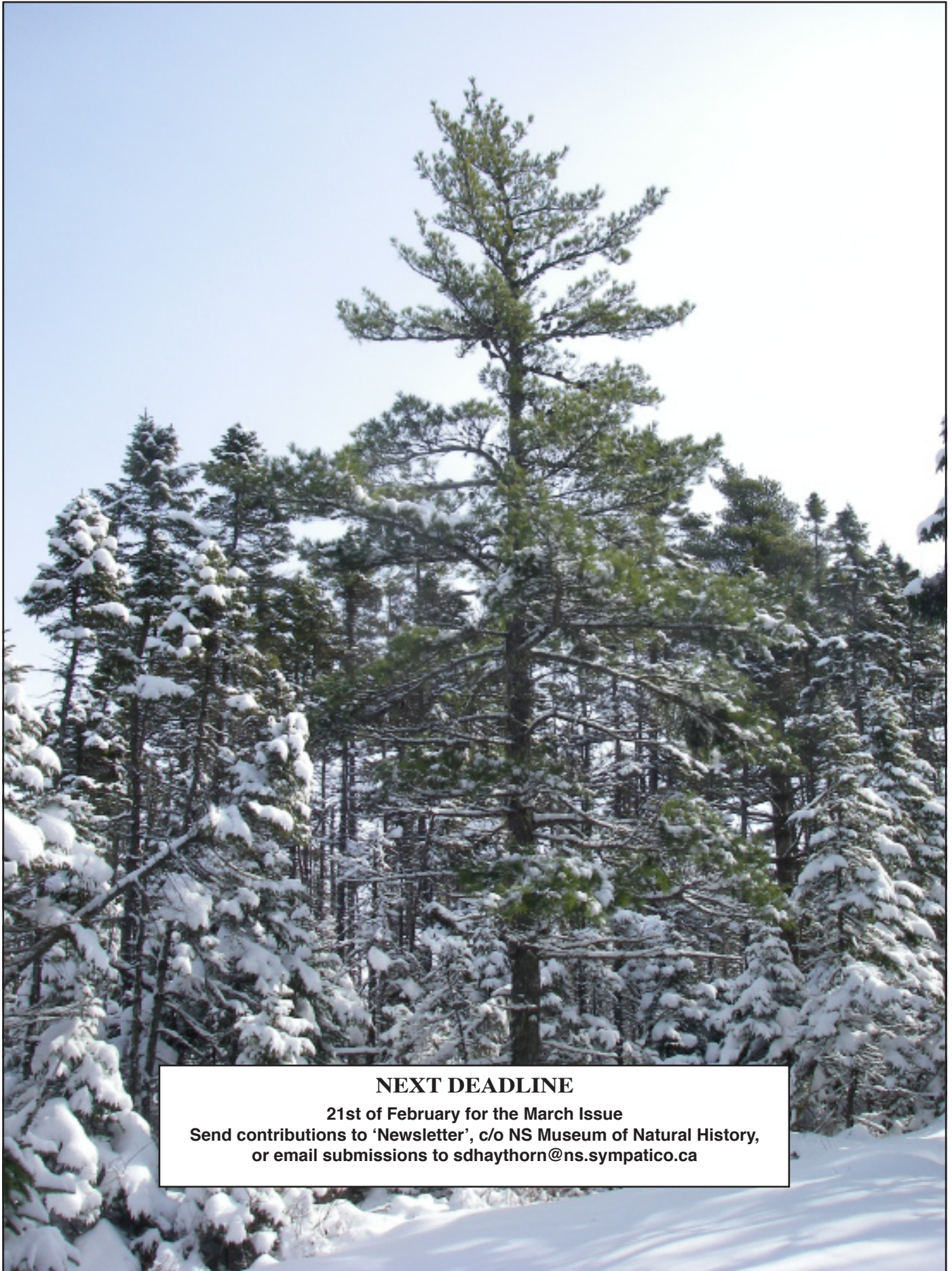
Mayor Peter Kelly, HRM, Office of the Mayor, 1841 Argyle Street, P.O. Box 1749, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 3A5; kellyp@halifax.ca.

More information can be found at <http://cpawnsns.org/campaigns/protect-our-land/bmbcl/index.php>.

NEW & RETURNING

Dollie Campbell
Sarah Chisholm
John Cunningham
Françoise Dardanne
David & Janey Hughes
Teresa Anna Mae Fisher
Jeremy Lundholm
Keith Murden
Caitlin Porter
Rev. Edward Thompson





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**