

Halifax Field Naturalists Newsletter

MARCH - MAY, 1985.

No. 39



Halifax Field Naturalists
c/o Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer St., Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

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MEETINGS: *First Thursday of every month at 8.00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax.*

FIELD TRIPS: *are held at least once a month*****It would be appreciated if those travelling in someone else's car on field trips share the cost of gas.*

MEMBERSHIP: *is open to anyone interested in the natural history of Nova Scotia. Memberships are available at any meeting of the Society or by writing to ... MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS, c/o N.S. Museum.*

*Individual memberships \$7.00 per year.
Family " \$10.00 " "
Sustaining " \$15.00 " "*

This covers our fiscal year ... JANUARY 1 to DECEMBER 31.

Members receive the HFN Newsletter and notices of all meetings, field trips and special programs.

EXECUTIVE 1985:	President	John van der Meer	(r) 455-1029	(o) 426-8276
	Treasurer	Bernice Moores	(r) 422-5292	(o) 445-2500
	Secretary	Michael Downing	(r) 823-2081	
Directors:	Vice-President	Edna Staples	(r) 868-2919	
	Past President	Doris Butters	(r) 463-0033	
	Membership	Colin Stewart	(r)	
	Programs	Filip Volckaert	(r) 479-1095	

*Connie Eaton
Ursula Grigg
David Lawley
Regine Maass
Mary Primrose*

NEWSLETTER: *Editor Doris Butters (r) 463-0033
Edna Staples*

MAILING *Halifax Field Naturalists*
ADDRESS: *c/o Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street, Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6*

*HFN is a member organisation of the Canadian Nature Federation.
HFN is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act.
HFN NEWSLETTER is produced by courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum.*

hfn news



A NOTE ON THE GREENES -

In a letter from George McKiel, President of Catherine Trail Naturalists' Club, he says that Erick stopped off in Montreal on his way back from Arizona. He had a computer with him and "his research is going so well that he got almost all his data on floppy disc between Montreal and Arizona". Good show, Erick!

And Anne also "pulled quite a coup - a veritable Findhorn - by growing vegetables for the entire research station out of soil rated nigh unto impossible. She went back to Princeton loaded with seeds for this year" - Good show Anne!

"THE SEA BELONGS TO WHOEVER
SITS BY THE SHORE"

Louis Dudek,
Atlantis, 1967.

NEXT DEADLINE -

25 July, 1985, for
the AUGUST issue. Mail
contributions to the
N.S. Museum, OR phone
the Editor at 463-0033.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS -

Leslie Linkletter
Millie Lawrence
Kent L. Noseworthy
H. Norwood and M.K. Akerlund
Graham & Laura Lunn
Richard Morash
Juanita Morton (visiting
from Australia)
Sandra Nicholas

HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR 1985 -

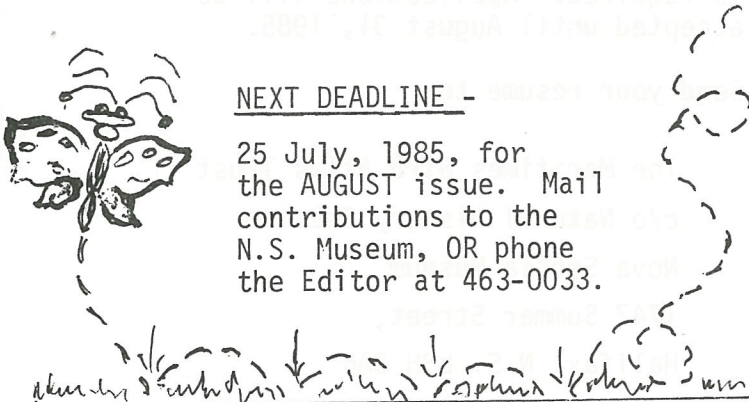
Although there were not too many entries suited to our theme of natural history, John did award two prizes at this year's Science Fair on April 19.

Copies of the beautifully-illustrated Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds, Eastern Region, were awarded to:

TANYA MacNEIL, Gr.7-8 group, of Caledonia Junior High for her project on "Acid Rain";
and

RAGHU DURVASULA, Intermediate Group, of Ellenvale Junior High, for his presentation on "Pesticides and Freshwater Ecosystems".

These two students will be invited to give a presentation of their work to HFN members in the near future.





notices

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S 1985 SUMMER VACATIONS

Adventure, discovery, wildlife and natural wonders and outdoor fun are all part of a Summit vacation.

This year's program covers:

Aug. 4-10 - NOVA SCOTIA MARITIME SUMMIT -
- ocean cruises, osprey and
field trips, beachcombing, bog
ecology, fungi foraging, fish-
ing, an evening lobster feast
and more.

Costs are reasonable. Program fees are:

Adult \$160.00
Teen/Youth..... 80.00

Accommodation additional and varies with
room selection. Small child
care service.

Features include: top-flight leaders, family
events, university credit option, wholesome
and delicious meals, hikes and field trips,
Ranger Rick youth program (5-12), Teen
Adventure program (13-17).

Interested? Want to know more about it?
Look for the green and white pamphlet at the
Museum and other outlets, or write:

Summer Vacation, Dept. ADK 85
National Wildlife Federation
1412 Sixteenth Street N.W.,
Washington D.C., 20036, USA.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas is
looking for a coordinator to oversee the
day-to-day operation of the Atlas project.
The ideal candidate will have demonstrated
abilities in most or all of the
following fields:

- project planning and organisation
- birding
- oral and written communication
- working with volunteer groups
- computer programming

The project will last five to six years,
and this position will be full time for
at least the first 18 months. The
location is Halifax. Access to a car
is required. Applications will be
accepted until August 31, 1985.

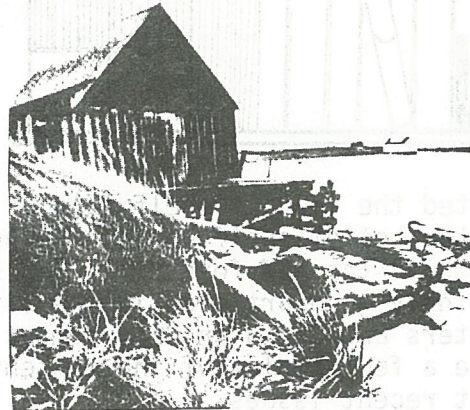
Send your resume to:

The Maritimes Bird Atlas Trust
c/o Natural History Section
Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

CANADIAN ASSEMBLY:
HERITAGE FOR TOMORROW ON
NATIONAL PARKS AND
PROTECTED AREAS

on
SEPTEMBER 4 - 8, '85

at
THE BANFF CENTRE,
BANFF, ALBERTA



Cape Breton Island, N.S.

In 1985 Canada's national parks will be 100 years old providing us with an opportunity to celebrate 100 years of heritage conservation and to consider the needs of the future..... conservation of cultural or environmentally sensitive areas? improved dialogue between management and public on present and future of heritage areas?..... consideration of the needs of both tourism and resource industries?..... conservation of native cultures and their special relationship to the land? parks and green spaces within our cities?..... definition of the future role of marine foreshore areas?

To consider these points, a series of 7 regional networks has been set up across Canada to bring together citizens interested in conservation, tourism, recreation, and cultural and natural resource organisations.

THE WORLD OF ROBERT BATEMAN -

Canadian Nature Federation advised us recently of a most exciting publishing event - the release in October 1985 of The World of Robert Bateman, an entirely new selection of 85 full-colour paintings by the well-known Canadian naturalist and artist, Robert Bateman. His commentaries on the paintings show Bateman's skills as a naturalist and give a fascinating insight into how a Bateman painting is created.

Nature Canada Bookshop is offering CNF affiliates a pre-publication discount

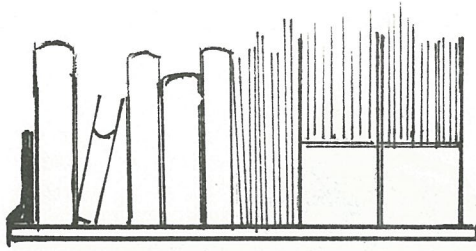
Each region will develop issue reports based on the natural and cultural heritage concerns in the region. (Synopsis of the Issue Report for Nova Scotia is on HFN library shelf in NSM). These reports, projects and national thematic issues will be presented at the CANADIAN ASSEMBLY giving Canadians an opportunity to look at the vision of the past and our commitment to future generations.

For further information contact:

Janice Brown (Conservation
Council of New Brunswick)
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 4A9 (Ph: 506: 454-6062.)

for copies reserved by September 15. For orders placed by September 15 the cost will be \$45.00 with no postage and handling charge. After that date the price will be \$45.00 plus a \$4.00 postage and handling charge. The suggested retail price is \$50.00.

To reserve a copy send a cheque or money order for \$45.00 payable to Nature Canada Bookshop, or a Visa/Mastercard number and expiry date. Mail by September 15 to Nature Canada Bookshop, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G1. Don't forget to indicate that you are a member of a CNF affiliated organisation.



on the shelf

Visited the library shelf lately? It is now on the bottom shelf behind the Reception Desk in the NSM foyer. It has some surprisingly good articles in the various newsletters and Canadian Nature mags. Here are a few samples of the contents of the most recent issues.

Heritage for Tomorrow (N.S.) Synopsis of the National Parks Workshop held in March to which David Lawley was HFN representative. The workshop was intended as a preliminary to the Canadian Assembly on National Parks which is to be held in Banff from September 4-8. (see separate notice).

Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas - the group's first Newsletter (with a wonderful logo) is now available at the NSM and other places. Any person interested in learning more about the project or would like to participate should call Peter Payzant, P.O.Box 2, Waverley, N.S., BON 2S0. Phones: 424-8519 (work); 861-1607 (home).

Nature Canada's spring issue has a most dramatic centrefold. All the articles are timely and worth our attention, particularly David Folster's "Damning Fundy", assessing the imperfect promise of tidal power in our beloved Cape Split area. Among the striking illustrations is a breathtaking aerial photo of the Split.

Bill Mason discourses on 'the best tent in the world!' there is also a feature story on Bill Mason describing him as 'adventurer, filmmaker and artist, and giving his interpretation of the language of the river.

The controversy over Meare's Island off the coast of B.C., rates quite a blast. There are other features, too, and the usual magnificent photos.

Woodstock Gleaner - a new commercial quarterly venture at \$1 per copy - a 'catch-all' devoted to natural living, the material garnered from near and far.

Nexus - a new-to-us newsletter from the Atlantic Center for the Environment - a division of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation in Maine. Their environmental concerns are similar to ours. They write about international co-operation on endangered species, this issue devoted to the subjects of Furbish's Lousewort, the Peregrine Falcon project, Piping Plovers etc.

New Brunswick Naturalist's spring issue is - very appropriately - dedicated to the trees, and contains well-written articles on the subject. Some of them are in French.



St. John Naturalists' newsletter includes an enlightening look at the Snakes of North America.

Catherine Traill Nat. Club celebrates its 100th issue of the newsletter (Congrats. Cat Nats!) with some historical notes on the club's beginnings and a very interesting feature on one of their members investigating parasitic diseases in mammals and fish. harvested by the Inuit, who spent five months as a full member of the hunting group of Inuit.

The 99th issue also contains some good reading - in particular "A Newfoundland View of Farley Mowat" and a more tranquil article describing the slow and painstaking care that goes into the artistry of Bonsai. (I loved this story! - Ed).

Island Naturalist, from PEI, has several items of interest - one, the first part of a feature dealing with the disappearance of many Island bird species.

nature notes

..... Dorothy Morris's observations in or near Shubie Park - 15 March, 35 male and female grosbeaks in her garden, the first and only time she has seen this species in that area..... 26 March, a small sprig of Mayflower almost in bloom after a day or two indoors..... 29 March, first Coltsfoot of the season..... 10 April, two Hairy Woodpeckers at work in Shubie.

..... Can you tell the difference between the quite edible Cattail and the poisonous Blue Flag, during the early stages of growth when only their blade-like leaf shoots are seen? - Common Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) is perfectly round down to the base; while Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*) shoots are flattened.

..... "Mayflower" - our harbinger of spring, but there's a lot of difference between that and the "Canada Mayflower" which blooms a little later. Definition: Mayflower or Creeping Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*) our early spring bloomer, is a member of the heath family, as you might guess from the tough leaves and tubular flowers; whereas Canada Mayflower, or Wild Lily-of-the-Valley (*Maianthemum canadense*) which blooms in May and June is quite obviously in the lily family. (Paul Keddy, 1976).

"THE RAZORBACK GOURMET -

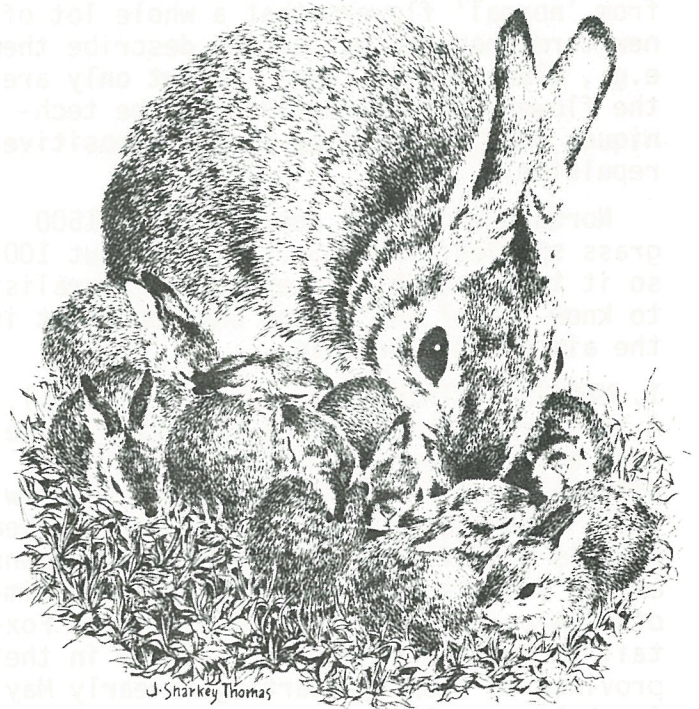
All do-it-yourselfers who find packaged instructions inadequate may sympathize with a simmering Arkansas farmer who, a couple of years ago, shot down a crow whose leg-tag bore the cryptic message... 'WASH. BIOL. SURV.' - the abbreviation of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Washington Biological Survey, and its address. Soon after, the department received this note

'Dear Sirs, I shot one of your crows the other day. We followed the cooking instructions on the leg-tag and I want to tell you it was horrible.'

The bands are now labelled
'FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICES'

Ricki Garrett.

(the above was in Harrowsmith #40, December/January, 1982.)



TEN GRASSES YOU CAN KNOW

by
Joe Harvey.

Almost May and we are still plagued by icy blasts that are keeping the temperatures down and the furnace turned up.

But spring IS on the way, the crocus are in bloom and the pussy willows silvering the willows; and the grass is greening once again, so perhaps in anticipation of summer we could reprint Joe's article on some of our local wild grasses.....

Grasses are a strange group in that, while they provide the majority of food for humans including (indirectly) beer, beef, milk and eggs, as well as obvious things like bread and spaghetti, they are *terra incognita* as far as recognising the wild species is concerned. The reason most people do not know the grasses is obvious - they (the grasses that is) are wind pollinated, have no brightly coloured leaves ('petals') and so do not draw themselves to the eye. In fact the necessity to adopt a 'stripped down' flower structure to allow free pollen movement by the wind, means that grass flowers are very small and abbreviated things indeed. However, for all their small size they are quite complicated and are so different from 'normal' flowers that a whole lot of new terms have to be used to describe them, e.g., glume, lemma, awn. So not only are the flowers not attractive but the techniques used to describe them are positively repulsive.

North America has approximately 1500 grass species; Nova Scotia has about 100 so it is reasonable to expect a naturalist to know ten of the common ones and that is the aim of this article.

1. MEADOW FOXTAIL (*Alopecurus pratensis*). A tall grass which shares the false spike type of inflorescence with timothy grass with which it is easily confused at a few feet. However, close inspection of a head reveals a profusion of tiny bristles (awns) on the florets which are missing from timothy (*Alopecurus* has awns - get it?). Foxtail is just about the first grass in the province to flower, starting in early May in sheltered places, but sweet vernal grass grass may beat it.

2. TIMOTHY (*Phleum pratense*). One of our commonest pasture and roadside grasses and much favoured by farmers because of the heavy hay crop it produces - most of the milk you drink is made from timothy. Like foxtail, timothy has a dense spiky head and may grow from a few inches to several feet high. It got its name from Timothy Hanson who took a trip to France in 1720 and collected grass seeds of various kinds. The one which grew best he advertised so enthusiastically it got called timothy. It is now the prime pasture grass of the whole northeast. It flowers about six weeks after foxtail and the heads persist long into winter, sticking out of the snow.

3. SWEET VERNAL GRASS (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). This vies with one or two others for the place of the first grass to flower in the spring. The 'sweet' in the name comes from the scent of the leaves which on drying give off a pleasant, almost vanilla odour of coumarin. It shares this with another Nova Scotia grass, holy grass (*Hierochloa odorata*) found at the head of salt marshes. Sweet vernal grass used to be looked on favourably by farmers because of the scented hay it produces, but coumarin is bitter-tasting and somewhat poisonous. The plants are short and tufted and the secret of identifying them is to pick a stalk and look at the junction of the leaf blade and the leaf sheath. The presence of both a membranous ligule and a tuft of hairs is diagnostic. If you find it pick some, let it dry and the next day get a sniff of the fragrance.

4. COUCH or TWITCH (*Agropyron repens*). A common weed which is the terror of the flowerbed and the farmer's ploughed field. Couch develops an extensive underground system of rhizomes which break on being pulled. Each fragment of rhizome can reproduce a whole plant so getting rid of it is no mean feat. Almost every roadside in every town has this grass on it. The spikes are of a very simple, straight structure unlike any other grass except the much smaller ryegrass (*Lolium*). Like all grasses except the last two

described in this article it was introduced from Europe where co-existence with agricultural man seems to have raised a group of vicious weeds as well as some useful species. There is a native Nova Scotian couch (dare I call it the Nova Scotian twitch?) which occurs on riverside, cliff and coastal areas, but this lacks rhizomes and never invades a man-influenced area.

5. KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS (*Poa pratensis*). Common in lawns, roadsides and pasture. Its name is a misnomer, the bluegrass of western Kentucky, which Daniel Boone and other early explorers reported as coming to the belly of their horse, was *Andropogon*. However, as soon as intensive cattle and then horse ranching got underway the *Andropogon* could not stand the grazing pressure and was displaced by various European grasses, chiefly *Poa* and the name was transferred to *Poa pratensis* which excels in the hot but humid Kentucky climate. Fairly dwarf strains which are easily grown commercially are highly touted for lawns, but in truth tend to be somewhat coarse growing. A common variety is 'Merion'. The related annual poa (*Poa annua*) is common in flowerbeds and along footpaths where it is able to withstand trampling better than most plants.

6. RED FESCUE (*Festuca rubra*). The needle leaves of this grass are the result of a rolled shape taken up by the blade; quite a few other grasses do this, it helps in minimising water loss. Sheeps fescue is a smaller version of the same basic pattern and tends to grow on dryer, more rocky areas than red fescue which is common in lawns and roadsides. Used in the finest lawns.

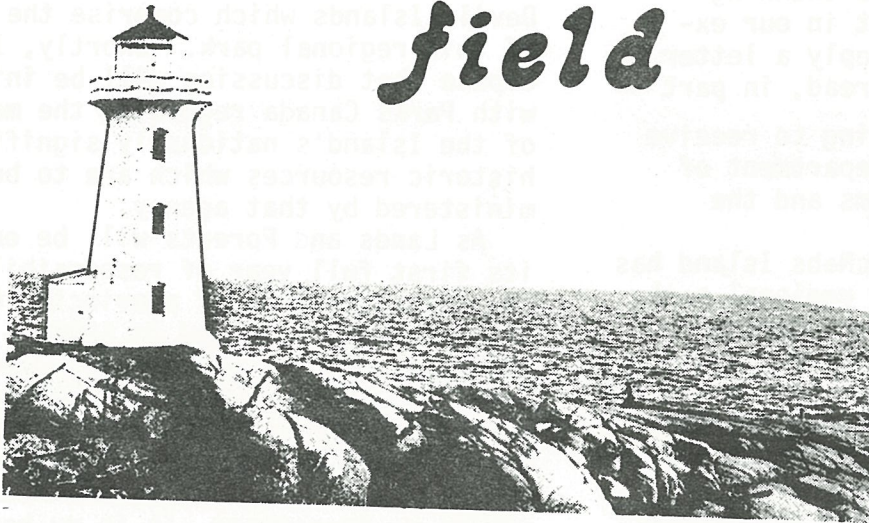
7. COCKSFOOT, (*Dactylis glomerata*). Like timothy this is a tall pasture grass common along roadsides and waste land. The clumped, one-sided arrangement of the spikelets (the 'cocksfoot' of the name) is quite distinct. This grass is also called orchard grass in the USA and is widely grown for hay.

8. BENT (*Agrostis tenuis*). A small, fine-leaved grass which is probably the most abundant lawn and roadside species in the Maritimes. The open panicle of very small, single-flowered spikelets is a common sight along roadsides and when in flower or with dew on them give a distinct misty effect when you are driving along the road. Good as a lawn grass.

9. MARRAM (*Ammophila brevigulata*). The grass responsible (with wind) for the formation of our coastal sand dunes, its very extensive rhizome system binding the sand which the leaves have collected around their base. This way the grass has been responsible for building dunes over 200ft above sea level. The growth of the rhizome is stimulated by having sand dumped on it - dune growth is thus automatic. In addition to having remarkable rhizomes, the leaves of this plant exhibit to an extreme degree the protection of the (upper) surface by the rolling of the leaf blade into a tight cylinder. This encloses the stomata, thus saving them from sand blast and drying winds.

10. CORD GRASS or SALT HAY (*Spartina alterniflora*). Performs the same binding task on estuarine mud that marram does on sand. Its rhizomes possess air channels which allow the roots to respire aerobically in notoriously stinky (anaerobic H₂S) mud. It is a coarse plant standing erect on the marsh. There is a dwarf fine-leaved relative (*S. patens*) which grows on the landward side of the cord grass zone and a taller species to 1.5m (*S. pectinata*) in salt-free portions of the upper marsh.





field

trips

McNAB'S ISLAND IN WINTER.

Place: McNab's Island in the mouth of Halifax Harbour, N.S.
Date: Sunday, 20 January, 1985.
Weather: Clear, 0° to -2°C, flurries later on in the evening.
Leader: Roger Pocklington.
Participants: 92 plus a seven month old baby.
Invited: Nova Scotia Bird Society.
 Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia.

McNab's Island in January?! H-m-m-m!
 Sort of field trip one needed to think about before packing that 'sturdy lunch'. But it worked - the day was a great success! The Bird Society and Photo Guild responded magnificently to Filip's invitation to join the Field Naturalists and over 90 persons showed up at the Ferry Dock.

The old Tancook Island Ferry, skippered by Capt. Mike Dalton and filled to capacity cast off just after noon - a dozen pairs of cross-country skis, a pair of snowshoes and a few sleds bearing witness to reason for the trip. For the hardy types on the after deck the short but exposed crossing must have been a very chilly one despite the brilliant sunshine.

On arriving at MacNab's, most of the group went with Roger Pocklington on a bird walk to the south end of the island; the skiers went off together on another route and a few people wandered off on their own.

To everyone's joy, the Department of Lands and Forests' staff opened up their house and served much appreciated hot chocolate and doughnuts. Even the new teahouse was open - welcome adjuncts to the 'sturdy lunch'.

The only negative note was the sight of a large quantity of oil on the shore, especially on the northern and eastern sides (probably related to activities at the oil refinery in Eastern Passage). Also Roger's remark that a group of developers is angling for space on McNabs to start up a shipbreaking yard. God forbid!

A friendly little dog on the wharf bid us farewell as we boarded the ferry at dusk to leave the lonely little island and return to the lights of a busy city.

Filip Volckaert.

A few days later Roger wrote to the Dept. of Lands and Forests thanking them for their involvement in our excursion and received in reply a letter from Ken Streach, which read, in part --

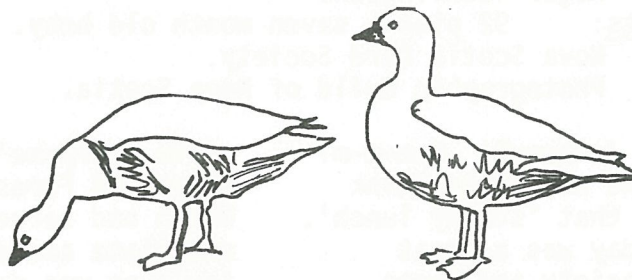
"... It is always reassuring to receive positive feedback about Department of Lands and Forests' programs and the efforts of its staff.

As you may be aware, McNabs Island has been part of a designated regional park since 1975. In 1983, it was decided by Provincial Cabinet that this regional park area, along with several others, would be assigned to the Dept. of Lands and Forests for management and development as a provincial park. As a result of this decision, responsibility for the administration of provincial Crown lands on McNabs Island was formally turned over to the Dept. of Lands and Forests by the Department of Development in October 1984.

To date, Lands and Forests' efforts have been directed to the preparation of

an overall management concept for McNabs Island, as well as for Lawlors and Devils Islands which comprise the balance of this regional park. Shortly, I anticipate that discussion will be initiated with Parks Canada regarding the management of the Island's nationally significant historic resources which are to be administered by that agency.

As Lands and Forests will be entering its first full year of responsibility for the administration of provincial Crown lands on McNabs Island in 1985, I welcome the expression of support received from your organization, and look forward to further input in the future... a preliminary management concept... has been prepared, and is under review internally within my Department. It is my hope that this work will prove useful in facilitating discussion about the future role of McNabs Island..." (In view of the shipbreaking yard proposal, we should keep a wary eye on that 'future role'),



BIRD LIST (McNab Trip) -

Great Cormorant
 Barred Owl
 Red-breasted Merganser
 White-winged Scoter
 Red-necked Grebe
 Iceland Gull
 Herring Gull
 Great Black-backed Gull
 Black-capped Chickadee
 Razorbill
 Common Goldeneye
 Black Duck
 Black Guillemot
 Common Loon
 Golden-crowned Kinglet
 Common Eiders.

LIKING LICHENS

Date: Sunday, March 17, 1985
Place: Musquodoboit Harbour area, along new cutting for Highway 107
Weather: Overcast, biting wind, near zero temperature
Leader: Wolfgang Maass. Participants: 12-14

Despite a snowstorm forecast, a large group drove to Musquodoboit Harbour where lichen expert, Dr. Maass, outdid himself in showing lush samples of growth. He also had a message: lichens which contain blue-green algae are particularly sensitive to air pollution and their disappearance can signal high levels of sulphur dioxide in the air. Herbarium records already document this in parts of New England.

We looked at *Lobaria pulmonaria* (common Lung Lichen) and two similar, foliose, tree-living lichens: *Lobaria scrobiculata* and *L. quercizans*. Filip Volckaert was the only one who ventured to taste the bitter flavour of a crustose lichen!

Dr. Maass told us that lichens living as epiphytes on tree trunks get nutrients which rainwater leaches from leaves and bark of the trees, particularly from conifers. In turn, lichen growth may secrete antibiotics which help the tree. Of course, lichen itself is a symbiotic, helping partnership composed of 95% fungi and 5% algae, and there are interesting interactions between these two components which function as one plant. When parasitic lichens grow on other lichens, fungi of the parasite may steal the algae away from the unfortunate lichen being preyed upon.

Plants seen or mentioned:

Lobaria pulmonaria - Lung lichen
L. scrobiculata
L. quercizans
Usnea longissima - old man's beard
Pseudocyphellaria - yellow pores, foliose, on trees
Sticta
Lecanora conizaeoides - thrives in polluted air
Nephroma helveticum - brown, foliose on trees
Platismata glauca
Alectozia - like old man's beard but flat at joints
Parmelia squarrosa - isidia along edge of lobes
Cetrelia - pink-tinged, foliose on trees.

Definitions:

CRUSTOSE means the plant is really imbedded in the rock or tree bark on which it grows.

FOLIOSE means the plant is only loosely attached to its substrate.

Useful Nature key: HOW TO KNOW LICHENS by Mason E. Hale, 1979. Wm.C. Brown publisher.

Lynn Regan



SUGARING-OFF AT MAPLETON

Date: Saturday, 30 March, 1985 (postponed one week from date on program - day-time temperatures had been unusually low and sap slow to run).
Place: East Mapleton, Cumberland County.
Weather: Overcast; slightly above freezing; strong, cold N.W. wind.
Participants: About 24

Half a dozen cars and 18 or so enthusiasts set out from the NSM (picking up a few more en route) bound for the sugar-bush in East Mapleton. The day was dry but overcast and the promised "intermittent sunshine" had a very political ring to it - soon forgotten.

We travelled via Springhill, each car at its own speed, but all arrived at the rendezvous point of East Mapleton Enterprises in the expected 2½ hours, which for some included a stop for gas, coffee, or whatever.

Mapleton Enterprises is a modern sugar operation with hundreds of trees strung together by blue plastic tubing. We followed the tubes through the bush in the hopes of discovering the final collection point, but as far as this writer is aware none of our party had the persistence to reach the end. By this time the wind was quite strong and raw and it was pleasant to huddle in the steam-filled boiler house where the sap was running steadily into a series of evaporator pans over a forced-draft fire fed by maple wood - or, indeed, as the proprietor told us, 'anything that would burn'.

The syrup ran in at the hottest end of the 15-20ft long pans and moved slowly along to concentrate finally over the flues that led to the chimney. A simple and efficient way of ensuring that the concentrated syrup was not burned by being heated over too hot a flame.

Most of us collected samples and gifts for friends from the little store which sold the maple products - syrup, cream, butter and candy.

From here we travelled a mile or so down the road to Adams' sugar operation, somewhat less modern in that the sap was collected in metal buckets and poured by hand into collection vessels on a tractor-hauled dolly. This being a colder area

the Adams really hadn't got the syrup-boiling operation fully underway, but again, the shack provided a nice, warm place out of the wind.



Our final stop was for an early Maple Festival 'supper' in the Southampton Fire Hall. Sausages, pancakes, baked beans, home-made bread and buns, all served with ample maple syrup, provided lots of calories for the modest \$4.00 charge, though we would all do well to avoid such a diet with any frequency!

The drive home via Parrsborough was scenically more attractive but for some of us it was too long a drive for real enjoyment.

Next year I think I'll just read about it.

Derek Eaton.