

Halifax Field Naturalists Newsletter

JUNE-AUGUST, 1985

No. 40



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

Halifax Field Naturalists

JUNE-AUGUST, 1985.

No. 40

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 | President | John van der Meer | (r) 455-1029 | (o) 426-8276 |
| 1985: | 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

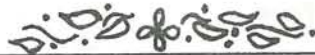
MAILING *Halifax Field Naturalists*
ADDRESS: *c/o Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street, Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6*

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



H.F.N. CONTRIBUTION RECOGNISED BY PARKS CANADA

Development of Kejimikujik National Park began in 1964 when Nova Scotia donated the land to the National Parks system. In 1969 a provisional master plan for Kejimikujik was prepared, which was revised in 1970 after a public hearing.

In 1975 the public was invited to help develop a new master plan for the Park and HFN responded by forming a Park Committee under the leadership of Paul Keddy, President at that time. A workshop was also held to discuss the many issues that were raised. The outcome was a detailed written response identifying the concerns of HFN members familiar with the Park, and the position of HFN with regard to additional issues identified by the Park.

This year as part of their Centenary Celebrations, Kejimikujik National Park honoured HFN with a plaque in recognition of our club's valuable input during the planning process. It was my privilege to receive the plaque on behalf of the club during a brief ceremony at the Park in June. Ironically, other members of HFN missed the presentation because they were still on the Nature Trail. I guess that shows we still have our priorities straight. WELL DONE HFN!

John van der Meer, President.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Nikki Benjamin
 Nancy Covington
 Jim Jotcham
 Nancy Meinertzbagen
 Lorraine Fullum-Bouchard
 Jean and Roger Rittmaster
 Richard and Lois Avison
 Mr. and Mrs. Fred Greene
 Janet Servant
 Matti and Sinikka Jauhiainen
 Catherine and Doug McCann & Jenni
 Tanya MacNeil
 Raghu Durvasula

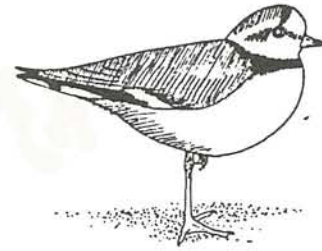
QUICK ACTION TO PROTECT THE PIPING
PLOVER -

4

On May 2, 1985, Suzanne Blais-Grenier and Ken Streach signed a document to officially transfer the Woods' property from the province to the federal government. The 2,210 hectare area will become part of Kejimikujik National Park, and the endangered Piping Plover on St. Catherine's River Beach will come under the protective park policies. However, there is still a lot of paperwork to wade through before the Parks Act can be enforced.

In the meantime, Parks Canada has acted quickly to assess the Piping Plover position. Less than two weeks after the signing-over ceremonies, proposals were being received for census work. A contractor was chosen by May 22 with work to begin immediately. A warden was to be hired and in place in July. The presence of Parks Canada staff in the area should create more local awareness on the plight of the Piping Plover.

Winnie Cairns discovered 27 nesting pairs of Plover on St. Catherine's River Beach in 1976 when the beach was relatively undisturbed by humans. Roland Chiasson and Stephen Flemming found only 14 nesting pairs just seven years later, in 1983. At this rate of decline, Piping Plover could become extinct in Nova Scotia by the end of this decade. Parks Canada has a chance to save these birds.



The resource advisor at Kejimikujik, Cliff Drysdale, is developing interim management plans to ease the pressure of human disturbance on the beach. He hopes these plans will be accepted and implemented this fall and be in place for the 1986 nesting season.

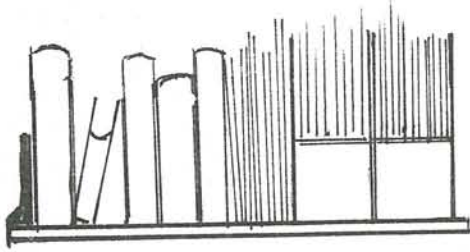
I feel that Parks Canada deserves recognition for quick action already taken and positive support for the implementation of interim management plans as soon as possible. Those who voiced their feelings at earlier public meetings can see their efforts beginning to bear fruit.

Letters of support and appreciation can be sent to Bill Wambolt, the Superintendent of Kejimikujik National Park. It's great to have a chance to thank someone for work well done, and let a little positive reinforcement help to continue this important work.

John Brownlie.

nature
notes

In my search for anecdotes on HFN history, I received the following from John Brownlie, but wondered if perhaps 'Nature Notes' might be a more appropriate spot for this item..... "For me, Paul Keddy has always been a symbol of the close connection between naturalists and nature. The reason? Paul suffered a sore throat every April, which he accepted as the natural course of events. He would explain that April is always wet and cool in the evenings; April is when amphibians migrate; naturalists always go out on wet nights to observe frogs and salamanders.....ergo..... it is only natural to have a cold in April! Some of us fight getting a cold, but Paul knew that you couldn't separate April colds and amphibians, so why try? It is all part of nature".



Nature Canada, Summer issue - as always, contains a wide variety of beautifully illustrated stories; in particular an interesting account of an exciting cycle tour made by John Dodd and Gail Helgason in the Golden Triangle of Banff, Kootenay and Yoho National parks. Closer to home, another cycling story - Prince Edward Island, its beaches and the Piping Plover.

What Gets a Porcupine's Back Up? - with more nice photographs. Perhaps the most timely item is one on Survival Tactics against mosquitoes, which accompanies a rather alarming account of Manitoba's Mosquito Wars - Winnipeg, it seems, becomes 'a bit unhinged when confronted with mosquitoes'.

As a bonus there's a gorgeous centre-fold of wild Iris - whoever she is!

notices

THE WORLD OF ROBERT BATEMAN -

If you are looking for a special gift for someone, you might like to consider The World of Robert Bateman - a new publication to be released this October. It consists of an entirely new selection of 85 full-colour paintings by the well-known Canadian naturalist and artist. The accompanying commentaries show Bateman's skills as a naturalist and give an insight into how a Bateman painting is created. Nature Canada Bookshop is offering the book at \$45.00 plus \$4.00 postage and handling charge. (Suggested retail price is \$50.00). To reserve a copy send cheque, money order or Visa/Mastercard number and expiry date to:

on the shelf

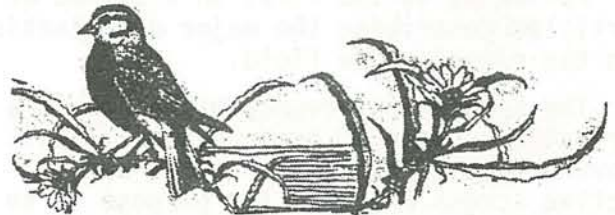
A subscription to Nature Canada would make a very nice gift to yourself or a 'loved one' you could borrow it from!

Island Naturalist includes Part II of Geoff Hogan's history on PEI's Birds of The Past.

Catherine Traill club newsletter has an interesting story on Australia's Great Barrier Reef and a jotting re the Greenes. While they were in Portal, Arizona, a Flame coloured Tanager was spotted 300 miles north of its usual territory; enthusiastic birders for miles around flocked to see it and Erick was called in to confirm the assessment for the group.

Blomidon Field Naturalist's latest newsletter also contains some good reading - in this case of local interest to Nova Scotians.

The Status of Ecological Reserves in Canada by Pierre Taschereau see book review elsewhere in this newsletter.



Nature Canada Bookshop
75 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ont., K1P 6G1

and indicate that you are a member of a CNF affiliated organisation.

---o0o---

Nature Canada Bookshop 1985 fall selection catalogue is also available and contains not only details of their outstanding book collection but also calendars, Christmas cards, binoculars and many other gifts for naturalists. To obtain a copy of this 40-page catalogue, write to the Bookshop at the above address indicating that you are a member of a CNF affiliated organisation.



reports

CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS - - 1

The Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Following is the first in a series of articles describing the major organisations in the conservation field.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is a private, non-profit organisation. It is governed by a board of trustees and is active across Canada. Its purpose is to ensure that some ecologically valuable properties remain in a natural state for educational, recreational and scientific purposes. It does this in two ways. It buys (or receives by donation) land and transfers it to a suitable managing agency, and it helps agencies raise funds to buy land.

Let's take an example: Wilsons Lake in Yarmouth County. The shores of the lake are important because they support *Coreopsis rosea*, a Canadian endangered species, and *Sabatia kennedyana*, a Canadian threatened species. They also support *Hydrocotyle umbellata*, *Rhexia virginica* and other species rare in Nova

Scotia. Late last year, Paul Keddy sent a proposal to Wildlands Habitat Canada seeking funds to acquire some of the lake shore. Halifax Field Naturalists, the Nature Conservancy through its local representative, and the Canadian Botanical Association, sent letters of support. Wildlands Habitat Canada agreed to provide 50 percent of the funding to a maximum of \$40,000.

This left the project at least 50 percent short. Paul then turned to the Nature Conservancy. As Wildlands Habitat Canada is willing to give the money, the Conservancy will probably be the purchaser.

The Conservancy began by assessing the property. Once satisfied that the property is worthwhile, they approached the land owners to see if they would be willing to sell (or donate). At Wilsons Lake, there are two adjacent properties. Currently one owner is willing to sell, and the other MIGHT be willing to sell a part.

The Conservancy then had to find both funds to complete the purchase, and a recipient to administer the land. The Nature Conservancy has a small fund of non-specific donations, but in practise the only feasible method over the long run is to approach potential donors with a proposal for a specific piece of property. Usually companies respond more favourably to properties in their area of operation. When I last checked, a N.S. operation had been approached and was considering support.

This left the question of who was to manage the site. (If the Conservancy retained all the land it acquired it would also incur all the costs of taxes, maintenance and other landowner expenses). By turning the land over to another agency the Conservancy can continue the work of acquisition while others put their efforts into management. When turning land over, the Conservancy includes a reverter clause so that if the receiving agency reneges on the conditions under which the land is to be managed, the ownership of the land reverts to the Conservancy. The property at Wilsons Lake will probably go to the Nova Scotia Museum.

I've given the impression that these steps are sequential. In fact, they are interwoven.

What does the Nature Conservancy do? Well, in this case it inspected the site, negotiated with the owners, sought funding and a suitable operator - all for 400 to 500 m of shoreline. Elsewhere the Conservancy probably has 20 other projects in various stages. Not all will succeed. It also checks up on land it donates. The reverter clause has been used.

Where did the Conservancy come from? Back in 1962, at a meeting of a committee of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the loss of valuable ecological lands was being discussed. England's National Trust (among others) was seen as a pattern for an agency to rectify, or at least slow down, these losses. In November, the Nature Conservancy of Canada was incorporated. The first success did

not come until 1966. The Conservancy had \$50,000 to put toward purchasing part of Cavan Swamp in Ontario. However, if the Conservancy gave the money to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority, the Authority would be able to get matching funds from government, hence buy twice as much swamp. This set the precedent. Since then the Conservancy has been able to average better than dollar for dollar. To the end of 1982 (its 20th anniversary) the Conservancy had acquired, and disposed of, 220 properties, representing 39,000 acres. In 1983, 17 more properties were obtained.

The Conservancy has had a number of Nova Scotian projects. Early on it handled a property in the Mabou Highlands. In 1979 the Barra Forest on the Bras d'Or Lakes began with a 650 acre donation to the Conservancy, which was subsequently turned over to Lands and Forests for a Nature Reserve. Since then two adjacent pieces of land have been donated directly to Lands and Forests. Barra Forest now totals over 1000 acres. The Nature Conservancy was also essential in getting the Xerox and other donations for the purchase of Hemlock Ravine in Halifax.

The Conservancy has a staff of six, and annual expenditures of about half a million dollars. These expenditures usually result in acquisitions valued closer to a million dollars. Their board includes two Nova Scotians, George Mitchell and Pierre Taschereau.

To make a donation (tax deductible) or for further information, their address is

The Nature Conservancy of Canada
2200 Yonge Street, Suite 1710
Toronto, Ont., M4B 2C6

Colin Stewart



field

trips



AN INSECT SURVEY - SO WHAT?

Date: Saturday, 13 April 1985. Participants: 18
Place: Head of St. Margaret's Bay
Leader: John Brownlie
Weather: Clear skies and sunny; but strong, cold wind

A spring insect survey? Sounds to me like some lame excuse for a walk in the woods.

Certainly, it was too cold for Mourning Cloak Butterflies to make their first flutter in the sun. Snow still covered the trail through the woods, but then, even naturalists can't predict the weather three months in advance. If we had known that snow would still be falling in Halifax in May, then we could have planned a winter insect inventory.

In any case, a peek into a brook revealed Stonefly nymphs and Blackfly larvae (hints of spring), and during lunch we marvelled at the well-built portable homes of caddis worms. One tiny, aphid-like bug with delicate, pale-blue wings appeared briefly while we ate. Our most impressive discovery was made by Audrey, who spotted a large, plump caterpillar with long wisps of brown fur and rows of little bumps along its back.

Despite a shortage of insects, there were, of course, many other things to observe. One member of the group,

told us about the wooden pipeline and surge tanks built more than 60 years ago, and which still carry water from the dammed lakes down to the generator to produce electricity. Small leaks in the pipeline had sprayed the surrounding shrubs with water which had frozen into fantastic and magnificent ice sculptures.

The bright golden bark of willows reminded us of Tim Randall's maxim about spring being just around the corner. Pierre Taschereau's handout on how to identify shrubs by their buds would have been very useful. I must remember to bring it next time. In the meantime, Doris collected some samples for later identification.

The most memorable part of the hike however, was a sight of the pair of Bald Eagles soaring over the treetops near their nest site deep in the woods. The N.S. Power Commission definitely deserves recognition for delaying work on a nearby powerline in 1983 during the critical spring nesting period. These eagles have been nesting successfully at this spot for at least 15 years and hopefully will continue to do so for many years to come.

John Brownlie.

POINT PLEASANT PARK

Place: Point Pleasant Park, Halifax
Date: Sunday, April 28, 1985 Participants: 15
Leader: Filip Volckaert
Weather: Cloudy and chilly

As Filip was pointing out to us a grebe and loon and describing the origin of McNab's Island (a drumlin), the original four members who had met near Black Rock Beach, were joined by seven others. Then as we progressed along the shore road a further four brought the number up to 15.

Along Shore Road we learned about the willow, with its male and female parts on one tree, and commiserated with the maples planted eight years ago on the occasion of the Queen's visit but which are the same size today, given the harsh environment on the Point. Attention was drawn to the large poplars growing on the roof of the old fortifications. New growth of Japanese Knotweed was starting to peek through the soil near the concrete shelters and the green spears of Day Lily were already in evidence.

Out near the Hen and Chickens rocks in the mouth of the Arm, two or three seals were surfacing at intervals; closer in was a flock of about ten Old Squaw Ducks which we watched for a while before continuing along the shore of Northwest Arm where we noted hawthorn and Sea Buckthorn (the latter a member of the olive family).

In this area we spotted a couple of juncos, chickadees and a squirrel posing for us on a log as he ate his lunch. An unidentified warbler flitted about, and among the gulls clustered around the sewage outfall two Icelandic Gulls were sighted.

We noticed several pines had a tumour-like growth on their trunks which Filip explained was caused by a virus.

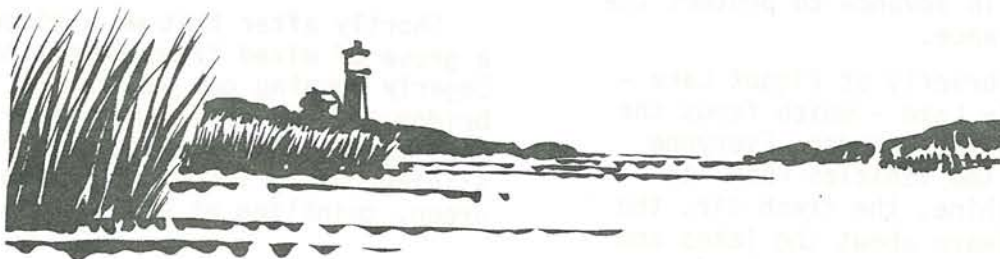
On the path leading to the Martello Tower we saw a Blue Jay and much evidence of squirrel feasts - tree stumps littered with nut and cone leftovers. At the tower, Filip pointed out the scour marks etched deep into the glacier-smoothed rock 'pavement'.

Along the Tower Road on our way to Cambridge Battery we noted with interest a feathery Norway Spruce. We had hoped to see birds flying over the cleared area but apart from a brief glimpse of a raven we only heard juncos and the chattering of many squirrels.

Walking back along Heather Road towards the parking lot we saw masses of heather and a fir tree with what appeared to be disease-damaged, corky bark. We watched a junco singing away in a spruce tree. No Mayflowers were spotted, though it was not for want of searching, but just before leaving the Park we did see signs of Blue Flag coming up by a small stream.

Our thanks to Filip for his interesting tidbits and for answering our many questions.

Nancy Sherwin.



BLOODROOT ALONG THE MEANDER RIVER.

Date: Sunday, May 5, 1985.
Place: Meander River System, Hants County, N.S., - source to estuary.
Leader: Alex Wilson, NSM
Weather: Sunny and bright; cold wind later in the day.

Sunshine set the mood as the group gathered at the Nova Scotia Museum. The trip began after two short slide presentations by the tour leader, throughout which he apologised for keeping us from the sunshine and the great world of growing things.

The first presentation showed maps of the Meander River area. These had been done by students of the N.S. Collge of Art and Design. We saw aspects of the river such as elevation, geology, land use and such features as a recreational plan etc. We were also shown photographs of the alluvial flood lands and some of the plants which grow there.

The second slide presentation began as the caravan of the NSM bus and following cars were about to move off. The door of the van slid off its tracks and Alex, assisted by occupants of the van and the Museum security attendant, spent the next fifteen minutes in sliding it back on again. This second slide presentation came nowhere near the first one in interest, but it did hold the attention of everyone present because we all had a vested interest in 'getting the show on the road'. The door fixed, we lost no time in getting out of the city. We were all eager to use our brilliant, sunny day productively and pleasantly along the river.

As we drove through Mount Uniacke, we learned that this area was the origin of the Meander River system. The delicate balance of areas as far away as the tidal flats at the end of these rivers 'could' be adversely affected by farming, industry, mining or forest management, if planning were not done in advance to protect the ecological balance.

We stopped briefly at Piggot Lake - just below Lily Lake - which feeds the tributaries of the Meander. Everyone jumped out of the vehicles keen to enjoy the sunshine, the fresh air, the view, and to learn about the lakes and plants of the area. We examined maps

to see where we were going and how those areas were interconnected by sharing the water, wind, sunshine, and other life-supports affecting them.

We drove on admiring the colours, textures, shapes and sizes of spring growth in plants, which in some cases is so different from their later stages as to be unrecognisable, even to those who so quickly identify them later in the season. Even from a moving vehicle the trees were not too difficult to recognise - the pale green blur of willow, the clear bright red blossoms of maple, the still-bare taupe of the tamarack, and constant dark green of the conifers. Closer, we enjoyed seeing catkins dangling like ear-rings - a trim brown on the alders, a fluffy pale green on poplar and willow. And closer still, alongside the road, we saw Pink Earth Lichen, horsetail and coltsfoot.

Turning left, we bounced along a dirt road. Reaction from those in the back of the bus indicated they were getting a 'whiplash effect' like skaters on the end of the 'whip'.

Just before turning onto pavement again we rounded a bend and our attention was caught immediately by the view of Cape Blomidon straight ahead. Although miles away in the Bay of Fundy, it was impossible to miss that distinctive blue profile. Between Cape Blomidon and the bus stretched at least half a dozen ranges of hills, each reflecting its own shade of blue, then layers of trees in the soft colours of delicate new growth, all accented by the evergreens, and finally the sun-filled fields stretching before and beside us.

Shortly after that we arrived at a grove of mixed trees near a small bridge. Eagerly hopping out we crowded onto the bridge to look upstream. The river tumbled towards us foaming white over rocks, and sliding calmly into pools of pale moss green, twinkling at us in the sunshine.

The steep, farside bank was a solid wall of rock covered thickly with glistening rich green hemlock. Beside it, a tiny tributary of white water fell down the rock into the river. We turned, and below us, on the other side of the bridge the river ran through the cool, dark tunnel of trees that we were to explore during the next hour.

Here we were introduced to a host of interesting, beautiful, amazing, or in some way memorable, plants. We met the 'high-rise' of mosses, *Hylocomium splendens*, where each new season's growth rises above that of the previous year. Among the now drab-brown of last year's finery, new growth peeped out in sharp green spikes; smooth, round probes of red; fuzzy, pale green or shiny, crisp coils of fern. Horsetails rose like tiny minarets. We met Partridgeberry, *Loberia* lichen, Christmas and Cinnamon Fern, Sensitive and Interrupted Fern, and the Liverwort, *Conocephalum*. We noticed several bracket fungi - the most interesting one deep red and shiny like raw liver, but dry and firm (*Ganoderma tsugae*).

Lack of time prevents further description of all the interesting things we observed there, just as time also forced us to leave the grove and go on toward Smiley's Provincial Park where we eventually were to see our first Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). There we were rejoined by a carload of our group which had gone astray. Two members of this group were Ding and Ai from China, welcome guests on the tour. A small group from the Blomidon Field Naturalists also joined us at this point.

Before lunch we took a short stroll to look at an area which - although it provided the necessary environment for Bloodroot - for some reason showed no sign of the plant. We did see columbine and geum, and a most beautiful black beetle with an iridescent blue sheen. It was ant-like and about an inch long, but unfortunately no one was acquainted with the species.

During lunch a cold wind blew in, the first indication that our sunshine was not going to last all day. Afterwards we walked along the river bank where we finally sighted our first Bloodroot, which

is so typical of interval plants and for which we had been searching. Here we also noted the brown spore cases of last year's Ostrich Fern; the new shoots had not yet appeared. Whitlow Grass (*Draba vera*) and Bluets grew in abundance, proof that small delicate plants are not necessarily fragile.

Those who were looking for birds spotted many species; among them Black and White Warbler, White-breasted Nuthatch, Chickadee, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Song Sparrows, Robins, Blue Jays and Purple Finch.

Not far from the Park, we visited two alluvial floodland areas, one a good-sized island sprinkled with Bloodroot like stars in the Milky Way, but unfortunately quite inaccessible to the public. The other location where we found quantities of Bloodroot was a low, marshy area beside a farm lane. A huge patch of Scouring Rush also grew luxuriantly in this area, and Blue Cohosh was identified by last year's poisonous berries.



Sanguinaria canadensis (Bloodroot)

At this time of year Bloodroot is the key to identification of the kind of area where the typical interval flora grows in a delicate ecological balance. The Nova Scotia Museum is concerned that some area be found which can be protected in order to conserve this type of flora against the ravages of development. Close to where we toured were two fields which had been reclaimed by the farmer who owns the land, and who now uses it to grow crops. We then moved down river to look at one more area which was white with Bloodroot and is a possible conservation site (i.e. Ecological Reserve). We could not get over to the interval land on the opposite river bank,

but where we were, among many other plants we found several beautiful spikes of Daphne in bloom, some Wood Rush (*Luzula*) and Turkey-tailed Polypore.

Our last stop was just above the point where the Meander joins the Herbert River. At this point the river is tidal and although the terrain is in all ways like the interval land which supports the plants in other areas, there is no Blood-root on that part of the river. The tidal water appears to be the inhibiting factor.

Our last stop was unanimously voted as being our second last stop when we saw all the other cars pulled up in front of an ice-cream stand despite the increasingly cold wind. Here we teased our innards with quantities of cold ice-cream and hot drinks. Finally we returned to the NSM satisfied, tired but happy after a very full Sunday.

The last wild things we saw as we drove back into town, were three deer grazing on the lawn of a building on Magazine Hill in Bedford. Don't ask me how they got there because I am not sure that we weren't half asleep and dreaming.

Frances Hansen.



KINGSPORT INTERTIDAL FLATS FORAY -

Date: Sunday, 7 July 1985

Place: Wolfville, N.S.

Leader: Sherman Bleakney

Weather: Very poor

Low clouds and drizzle lowered the enthusiasm of many a Blomidon naturalist that Sunday morn - even our expected visitors from Halifax Field Naturalists never materialised from the mists of Minas. However, our hard-core contingent of true-blue field trippers was augmented by unexpected guests: the Bogans of Chattanooga, Tenn., and a van-load of agriculturalists from Lebanon, Cuba, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Venezuela, courtesy of Tom Haliburton, Truro. Although not fully prepared for a mud-flat hike in the rain, many of our visitors were very sporting and plunged in and enjoyed themselves (and the raw Blue Mussels, *Mytilus edulis*) for nearly two hours.

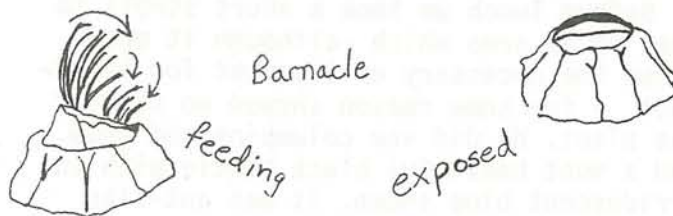
We first noted the results of establishment and encroachment of a bed of marsh grass across what had been a sandy bathing beach 25-30 years ago. Countless small snails coated the rich ooze just beyond the grassy area. The same process is now taking place inexorably on the north side of the wharf.

We then dug into the seemingly barren sands and muds, where innumerable *Corophium* crustaceans, fine red worms, and large-jawed worms were revealed. These are the creatures which are the prime food items of the numerous fish and birds that live here, as well as those fish schools and bird flocks that feed here only during their migrations.

We then examined the sandstone outcrops and their tide pools and noted in particular the grey coating of millions of barnacles (sort of sessile 'crabs' with their heads cemented to the rock and their legs waving above them). Beneath the rock islands was a beard of green sea lettuce and colonies of brown hydroid animals. The barnacles coated the mussel beds as well, and even the backs of tiny snails.

Little hermit crabs were really abundant, and shells of the interesting warm-water southern Lady Crab and Spider Crab were found. There were snail egg cases and adults, tide-pool 'eels' (rock gunnell), algae, sponges, bryozoans, shrimps, hydroids, rock-drilling clams, eider ducks and so on - each a cog in a complex biotic clockwork set to a 12-hour and 25 minute rhythm that provides yummy mud for astronomical numbers of voracious little tummies.

Jim Wolford.



(Only two HFN hard-core field trippers showed up at NSM but were unable to get to Wolfville as neither had a car. Too bad - despite the weather Jim's report indicates that it was quite a rewarding trip, particularly as it included overseas visitors)

SPRING FESTIVAL AT KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK

Date: Sunday, 9 June, 1985
Site: Kejimkujik National Park
Participants: About 15
Leaders: Parks Canada Guide and Lesley Butters
Weather: Cloudy, but becoming sunny and warm before noon.

It was a special occasion that brought us to 'Keji' this spring. We had been invited to help celebrate the park's spring festival, which included a big birthday cake in honour of the 100th birthday of Parks Canada. As part of this celebration the HFN was being honoured with a plaque in recognition of contributions our club had made during the formative years of the park. The trip was also special in a personal way in that it was my first visit to Keji in the ten years I have lived in Nova Scotia.

The day began at 8:00 when we left the NSM parking lot and hustled down to Keji hoping to make a 10:00 guided walk (the last public walk of its kind being offered after the recent reductions in the Park budget). Surprisingly, those few who were meeting us at Keji after overnighing near the Park didn't catch up until we were well down the trail adjacent to the information centre.

For me the highlights of the day began with a pair of deer grazing along the side of the highway, the first of about a dozen we were to spot during the morning. On the trail itself the spring flowers were past their prime but the Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) were beautiful as ever. I also saw my first specimen of Indian Cucumber Root (*Mediola virginiana*). For the latter, the guide carefully brushed back the litter exposing a small, thickened, snow-white root from which the plant takes its name. After all had seen the root it was covered again and the plant left undisturbed as it is no longer abundant. Another interesting plant brought to our attention was the Spotted Coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*). Although it was not yet in flower this reddish member of the orchid family was interesting because it lacks chlorophyll pigment and draws its nourishment from

the trees under which it grows. For myself and many others on the walk, the most exciting moment came when we startled an Ovenbird that was nesting on the ground near the path, revealing the location of its nest. This was a rare find indeed, as many avid birders have never seen these well-hidden nests that have their opening on the side and really do look like an old-fashioned oven. Several photographs were taken of the nest and eggs without disturbing it, and hopefully the bird returned soon after the motley crew from Halifax and other sundry points, left the scene.

After a break for lunch beside the Mersey River, we visited the old hatchery in the park, which had open house displays of nets and local fish, and somewhat unexpectedly, a display on the use of satellite photography as an aid in park management. From there, Lesley Butters got us started down the Grafton Lake Trail which included interesting marsh sections. Several members were briefly puzzled by stout yellowish plants that were pushing their way up at several points along the trail. These turned out to be Squawroot (*Conopholis americana*). Another parasitic plant spotted on this trail was Pinesap (*Monotropa hypopithys*) which I mistook at first for Indian Pipe.

As we were leaving the park I spotted a large porcupine along the side of the park road, the first one I had seen in the wild (not counting the endless number of dead ones on the highways). We stopped to have a closer look and I was surprised to see how quickly it could climb a tree when confronted with such a dangerous crew. In summary, it was a trip well worth the effort and I'm sure it won't take ten years before I go back for another visit.

John van der Meer.

A TRIP TO THE CAPE BRETON BIRD ISLANDS -

Last July I was treated to rave reviews of the Bird Islands in Cape Breton, by an American visitor who had thrilled to see puffins and razor-bills for the first time.

There and then, I resolved that I too would see birds that had intrigued me for years. Once the date was decided I phoned the van Schaik's and booked space on their 10.00 am cruise on August 11th. I advise anyone who is interested in a trip to do the same - it is too long a drive to take without planning ahead.

The cruise leaves from Mountain View by the Sea, a charming spot on the shores of Big Bras d'Or. The van Schaik family operate a camp ground with rolling lawns, colourful flower beds, an excellent little restaurant and picnic tables and benches overlooking the water.

At 10 am on Sunday, 11 August, the weather was ideal - calm water and sunshine; the boat was full, mainly with Americans, many on a camper tour of the Maritimes, others had attended the National Wildlife Federation 1985 Summer Summit Vacation at Antigonish.

On the way out to the two islands, Hertzford and Ciboux, Joe van Schaik pointed out several Bald Eagles perched in trees along the shoreline. We were treated to a story of gulls attacking one eagle and forcing it into the sea; the eagle was later observed swimming to shore! As we rounded Ciboux Island an immature Bald was spotted being routed by a number of gulls. The eagle circled and returned to perch on a ledge away from his assailants, his proud profile silhouetted against the sky.

Swimming around the islands and basking on the warm rocks were a number of Grey Seals.

The islands themselves were lined with Cormorants, Great and Double-Crested - Kittiwakes and Blackback and Herring Gulls. The Razor-billed Auks I had hoped to see had left at the end of July, and the Atlantic Puffin was in short supply. However, several small groups of them were swimming about near the boat and flying

back and forth to the islands. I was quite surprised at the small size of the puffins as I had expected to see a bigger bird. Nevertheless, I was thrilled to see them. We closely circled both islands very slowly so that the many camera buffs aboard had ample opportunity to take pictures.

I have resolved to go back, but next time earlier in the season when the young have just hatched and the adults are busy feeding them, and before the majority of them go out to sea. There should at that time also be more species to be seen than are there in August.

Hilary Grant.



For anyone interested in taking this trip, contact:

- J. van Schaik, 674-2384
Mountain View Lodge, C.B.
- The cruise costs \$12.00 for adults and lasts over two hours.
- Cruise times are 10.00 am and 1.30 pm daily, weather permitting.

book reviews

THE STATUS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES IN CANADA, by Pierre M. Taschereau -

In 1974, at the end of ten years of IBP (International Biological Programme) about 1000 Canadian 'special natural sites' had been identified. It was suggested that these areas, and others like them, be protected as 'ecological reserves' - areas set aside for non-destructive research and enjoyment - and for their future value as undisturbed sites.

This book looks at the situation in 1985. However, as you can imagine, with ten provinces, two territories, the federal government, private owners, and numerous special groups, the situation isn't simple.

Dr. Taschereau begins with a brief who's who of federal government departments and private organisations, and how inter-relationships have developed. He goes on to discuss model legislation for the protection of ecological reserves, then reviews the current legislation province by province. The appraisal includes the requirements and the implementation of the laws - which can differ substantially.

That review leads to a discussion of the progress towards protecting significant ecological sites over the last ten years (generally slowly) and the reasons. Legislation of some sort is generally in place. Except in British Columbia the number of designated reserves is low. Management planning is weak. This assessment leads to a consideration of the problems and possible new approaches.

Several appendices list the people who contributed information; they represent most of the important conservation offices in Canada.

In the process of documenting the status of ecological reserves, Dr. Taschereau also presents a summary of important national conservation organisations and provides a fair view of conservation accomplished through other means such as national parks, provincial parks, wildlife reserves, etc., and the differences in their objectives.

If your special interest is **ecological reserves** this book is indispensable as the only summary for Canada.

If you are interested in the protection of natural areas but confused by the many groups and mechanisms, you will find this a useful sorting-out. It is easily followed without specific background knowledge.

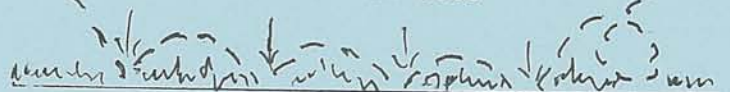
The Status of Ecological Reserves in Canada, by Pierre M. Taschereau, 1985. pub. by the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas and the Institute for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University. 120pp. \$8.00. (Available from IRES, 1312 Robie Street, Halifax, B3M 3E2; include an \$8.00 cheque payable to IRES).

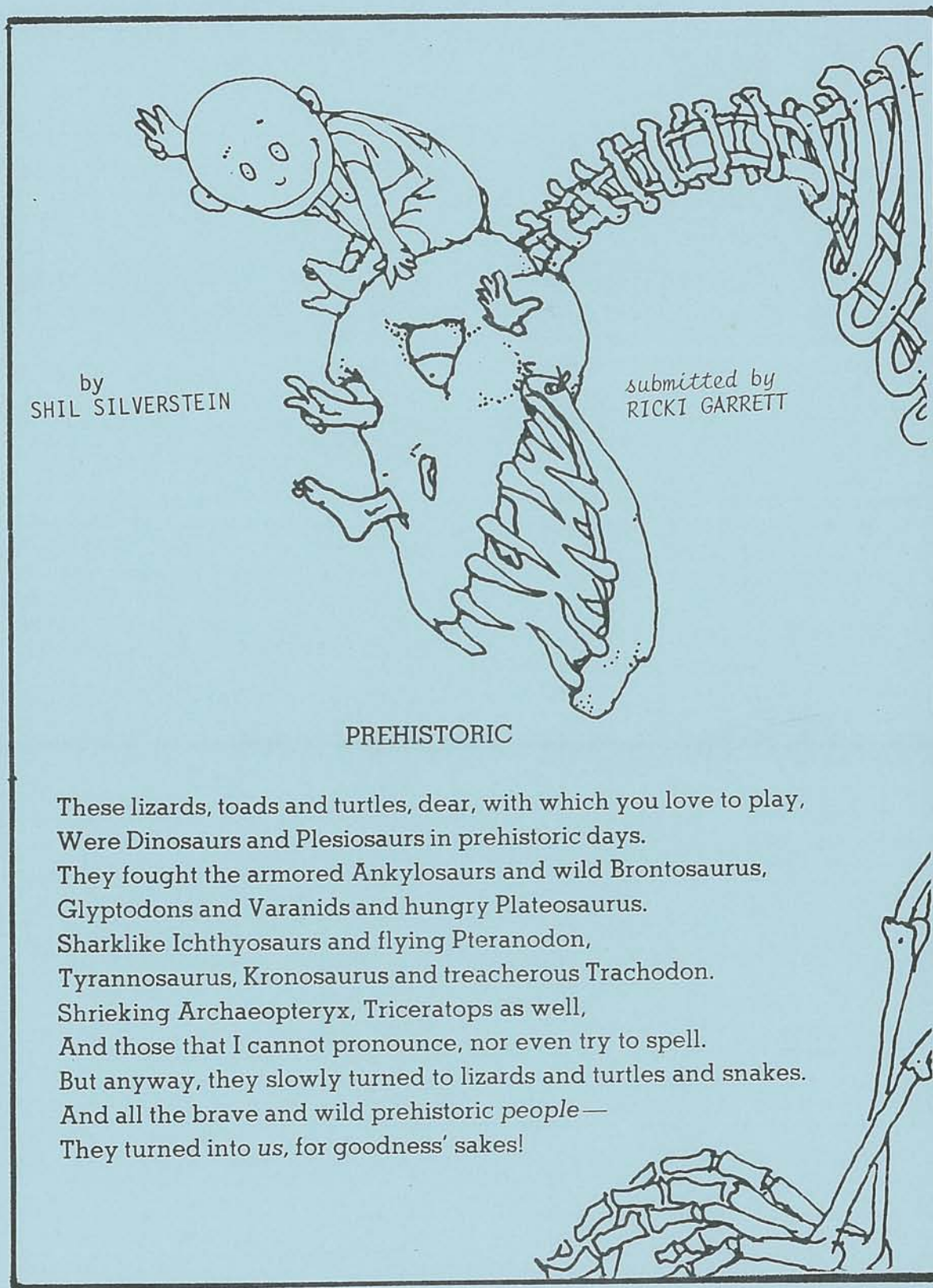
Reviewed by: Colin Stewart



NEXT DEADLINE -

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





by
SHIL SILVERSTEIN

submitted by
RICKI GARRETT

PREHISTORIC

These lizards, toads and turtles, dear, with which you love to play,
 Were Dinosaurs and Plesiosaurs in prehistoric days.
 They fought the armored Ankylosaurs and wild Brontosaurus,
 Glyptodons and Varanids and hungry Plateosaurus.
 Sharklike Ichthyosaurs and flying Pteranodon,
 Tyrannosaurus, Kronosaurus and treacherous Trachodon.
 Shrieking Archaeopteryx, Triceratops as well,
 And those that I cannot pronounce, nor even try to spell.
 But anyway, they slowly turned to lizards and turtles and snakes.
 And all the brave and wild prehistoric people—
 They turned into us, for goodness' sakes!