

Halifax Field Naturalists Newsletter

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1985

No. 41



return address:
HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS
c/o N.S. MUSEUM, 17 SUMMER STREET
HALIFAX, N.S., B3H 3A6

Halifax Field Naturalists

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1985

No. 41

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	
	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

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Although it doesn't seem possible, it is already time to start thinking about the next annual meeting (March 1986) and the election of the new Executive. Last year all of the officers and most of the directors were returned by acclamation. Some of these executive members have now served the club in one capacity or another for a number of years and will not be reoffering next year. Consequently, there will be a larger-than-usual number of vacancies to fill this year. The President, Vice-president and at least 2 directors have, or will, retire in the next few months and it is possible that there will be additional vacancies before March. Of course, all the executive positions and not just the vacant ones may be contested in the elections by interested members. If you would like to serve on the next executive or know of someone who would, please let us know as soon as possible. Your help will ease the job of the nominations committee.



MARITIMES BREEDING BIRD ATLAS -

The Maritimes Bird Atlas Trust is pleased to announce that contract negotiations have been completed with the Department of Supply and Services and the Canadian Wildlife Service. As a result the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas will be completely funded for the next 18 months with contributions coming from these two Federal Government agencies and from the Nova Scotia Museum. This has allowed us to hire a full-time coordinator for the project and we are very fortunate to have acquired Judith Kennedy to fill the position. Judith has been working as the Assistant Coordinator for the Ontario Atlas for the last two years and took up her new duties as Coordinator of the Maritimes Atlas on October 28.

We had a successful trial field season for the Maritimes Atlas this year with many new atlassers having been 'bitten' by the atlassing bug. Predictably, the most common bird species reported in the field cards which were returned to us was

the American robin, followed closely by the barn swallow. A total of 144 species was reported and of these, an impressive 96 received 'confirmed' breeding status.

If you would like to take part in the Atlas, or if you would just like to be placed on our mailing list to receive our quarterly newsletter, contact Judith Kennedy at the Nova Scotia Museum, Natural History Section (429-4610 local 157).

Linda Payzant.

WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS -

Elizabeth Learmouth
 Charmaine Wood
 Linda Gallant
 Karen Kingston
 Elizabeth Abbott
 Joyclin Coates and Paul Boston
 Judith Kennedy
 Daureen Stover
 Claud Renaud family

THE LATEST NEWS re: ERICK AND ANNE GREENE -

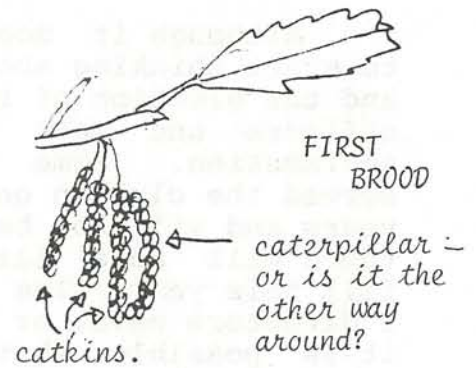
via George McKiel of the Catherine Traill Naturalists Club, we have received the following - a glimpse into Erick and Anne's experience in Princeton and into Erick's research towards his PhD.....

"... we spend about six months in Arizona doing research on birds/insects, and the other six months teaching and writing in Princeton. We had fully expected New Jersey to be the armpit of the east coast, but we have been pleasantly surprised! The southern half of the state is covered by the Pine Barrens, which is a fascinating fire-maintained boggy-pine habitat. There are some astounding estuaries and marshes along the coast, and we often go down in the fall to catch the snow geese and brant geese honking of the tundra. We have a little apartment that borders on the woods of the Institute of Advanced Study (where Einstein strolled), and we are serenaded nightly by woodcock (in March) and screech/barred and great horned owls!

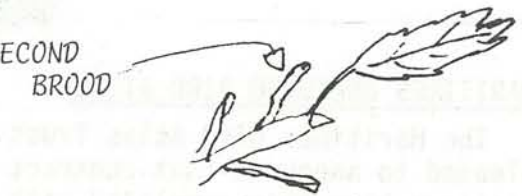
"My thesis research has to do with a group of insectivorous birds in a very simple habitat here. In a nutshell, I'm trying to figure out what sort of interactions take place between species, and how important they are in determining who breeds where, etc. I have just finished a massive set of playback experiments, in which a recorded song and a model of a bird are put in the territory of a real bird. The real bird gets a chance to respond to this 'questionnaire' by beating-up on the model, fleeing south of the border and so on. There are some strong interactions between species, and in general it is the larger bird beating-up on the smaller species. We have put up scaffolding around trees with netting on it to keep out the birds; this gives an estimate of the impact of bird predation upon the insects.

"The insects are fascinating; I have been getting sidetracked by them. There are some amazing mimics. One of my favorites is a geometrical larvae that looks like an oak catkin! However, this species is bivoltine, and the second brood comes out in the summer long after the catkins are gone. What to do? You guessed it - the second brood looks nothing like the first; instead they look like twigs! Another species is flat like a pancake, and it replaces the part of the leaf it has eaten, with its own body, minimizing the risk of detection by visually-searching predators...

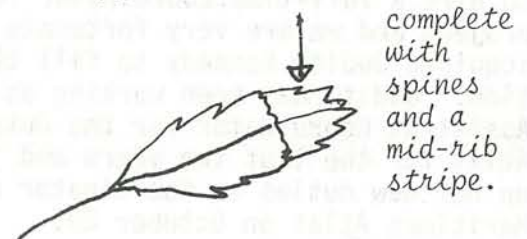
"P.S. - the Flame-coloured Tanagers brought off a batch of chicks..."



SECOND BROOD



FLAT CATERPILLAR -



OFFICIAL OPENING OF HEMLOCK RAVINE -

Hemlock Ravine Park was officially opened on September 28, 1985. The ceremony was attended by several City aldermen, representatives from the Province and several interested organisations. Alderman Gerald O'Malley stood in for Mayor Ronald Wallace who was ill and unable to attend. At the opening, Alderman O'Malley greeted the thirty to forty people who were gathered for the ceremony. Alderman Alf Hamshaw, who's ward includes the new Park, told about his growing-up years when he knew the area well. When he became an alderman he worked hard to influence the City of Halifax to claim the area as a park. The Provincial Minister of Mines and Energy, Mr. Joel Matheson, representing the Province of Nova Scotia, made a few remarks concerning the role the Province took in helping to establish the Park. Dr. Pierre Taschereau spoke as a representative of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which was responsible for a good portion of the money needed to buy the land for the Park. Pierre gave some interesting background history about the Nature Conservancy.

The City flag, covering the large sign giving the name of the Park and a map of the paths, was then pulled aside by the officials of the gathering and the Park was declared open. A further ceremony of cutting a wide green ribbon across one of the paths, concluded the official opening. Following this everyone was welcomed to participate in a short walk through the Park to Grosvenor Wentworth School where coffee was being served.

The City has produced a very attractive brochure which tells the past and recent history of the area. It also includes a map of the paths (a great help) and some natural history of what one can look for while on a walk through the Park. The heart-shaped Julie's Pond is now edged with a low wall; one wonders what the salamanders think of this! It was comforting to see the usual pair of black ducks in the pond, not at all put out by the new cement. At the opening that morning a young neighbourhood child had an unexpected bath when he fell off the wall into the pond - however, he merely looked surprised.

The entrance to Hemlock Ravine Park is found by going to the end of Kent Avenue, a narrow street which goes off Bedford Highway directly across from Prince's Lodge. There is a parking lot at the entrance to the Park with Julie's Pond just a few steps away. There are several paths which wind in and out, identified by such names as Lady Wentworth Walk, Governor Trail, Friar Lawrence Way and Prince George Path. The most sensitive part of the Park is played down - there is no official path off the Bedford Highway leading directly to what was the area we knew originally as Hemlock Ravine. Instead, one reaches it by travelling along the paths which wander through the Park, beginning at Julie's Pond.

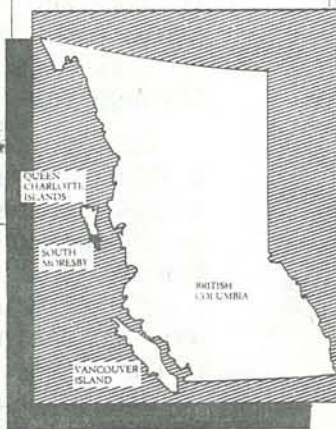
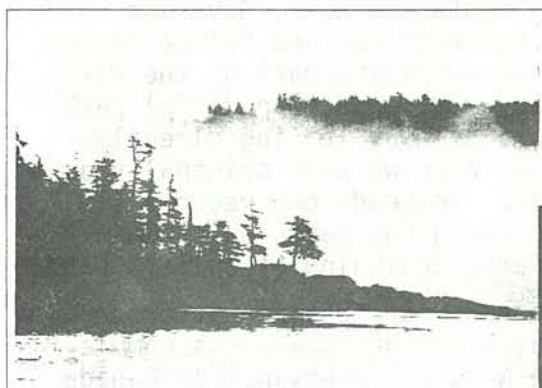
Earlier in the year Freeman Patterson, a famed Canadian photographer, was commissioned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada to photograph all the properties across Canada in which the Conservancy had lent a helping hand. Perhaps we can look forward to seeing a publication of these photographs. In the meantime, we can record our own images of the Park, there are many lovely ones to find there, particularly in the original "Hemlock Ravine".

Mary Primrose.



Would you let them destroy the pyramids of Egypt?

British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands hold treasures every bit as special as the pyramids. Yet these treasures may be lost forever!



Already centuries old when Columbus arrived in North America, the Sitka spruce, western hemlock and red cedar are among the largest trees on earth. But they are targeted for logging in South Moresby, the wildest and most beautiful part of the Queen Charlottes.

At this moment what is happening on the poor, old Charlottes resembles a desperate attempt to loot a treasure house before the owners, you and I, realize what's going on and take measures to stop it.

— Bill Reid, Haida sculptor

WHAT MAKES SOUTH MORESBY UNIQUE?

☐ The world's largest concentration of the rare Peale's peregrine falcon and the largest nesting concentration of bald eagles in Canada;

☐ Over one-quarter of all the nesting seabirds on the Canadian Pacific coast;

☐ More than one-half of Canada's Steller's sea lions;

☐ Eleven species of whales;

☐ The world's largest black bears;

☐ Plants, birds, mammals and insects found only on the Queen Charlotte Islands;

☐ Several hundred archaeological sites, including the Haida Indians' Ninstints village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site;

☐ Some of the most majestic scenery on earth.

WHY LOG IT?

South Moresby has only 2/10 of 1 percent of British Columbia's productive forest land. There are means to compensate the logging companies without loss of jobs.

WILL WE LOSE IT?

The federal and provincial governments must be shown that Canadians care about South Moresby.

Federal Environment Minister Tom McMillan and BC Environment Minister Austin Pelton have said that they place top priority on preserving the area. But they need strong public support to convince their governments that South Moresby needs to be preserved.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT; PLEASE ACT NOW!



Preserving bits and pieces (of South Moresby) is not good enough. It is like preserving a stately historic building and surrounding it with parking lots.

— Robert Bateman, artist

YOU CAN HELP.

Tell Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Premier William Bennett of British Columbia:

Stop the logging of South Moresby NOW. Preserve this world treasure as a park for ourselves and future generations.

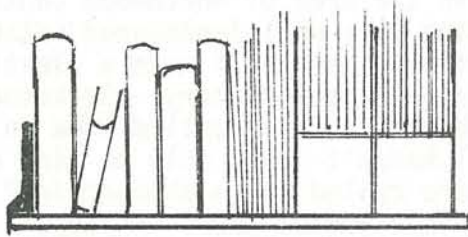
WRITE or TELEPHONE:

Right Honourable Brian Mulroney
Prime Minister
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6
(613) 992-4211

Honourable William Bennett
Premier
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4
(604) 387-1715

You can support the effort to save South Moresby by sending donations to:
The Save South Moresby Fund
c/o The Canadian Nature Federation
75 Albert Street, Suite 203
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G1
Telephone (613) 238-6154
Donations are tax deductible, and receipts will be issued on request.

on the shelf



- To revert to the subject of DUNES (see field trip report elsewhere in the newsletter) there is an informative and very readable essay from the Department of Lands and Forests, now on the Library Shelf. This essay on dune dynamics emphasizes the importance of the dunes and their extreme sensitivity.

- Peggy's Cove Preservation Society has published a neat little information booklet to familiarise visitors to Peggy's with the various aspects that make the area such a special place. IT DOESN'T ALWAYS BLOW IN PEGGY'S COVE is compiled from reports of an environmental study carried out by two N.S. College of Art and Design students. You are welcome to borrow HFN's copy or you may like to spend \$1.50 and get your own from Pair of Trindles Bookstore.

- N.S. CONSERVATION is an informative little journal put out quarterly by the Dept. of Lands and Forests, the content being all provincial. We have several on the shelf but you can get on the mailing list by writing to:

Editor, N.S. Conservation
P.O. Box 68, Truro, N.S., B2N 5B8
for your own 'freebie'.

- NATURE CANADA summer issue contains a plea for help in saving the Piping Plover, with particular emphasis on the problem in PEI. The situation is not improving and on the Island the Piping Plover has now been transferred from the threatened to the endangered list.

- Newsletters from other naturalist groups continue to arrive and all contain items worth reading. - St. John's Naturalist Club issue presents Art Gilligan's touching poem "Ballad of a Polluted Coast" plus... an item on camels! --- Larry Bogan of Blomidon Field Naturalists instructs us on how to locate Halley's Comet this winter, illustrated by the appropriate areas of night sky at various times. --- And the August issue of Catherine Traill Naturalists' Club newsletter is more than usually interesting - it is devoted entirely to detailed reports from participants in their Newfoundland Workshop which was held at Memorial University from July 17-26. A captivating look at the many aspects of life in Newfoundland, illustrated by the cutest thumbnail sketches by participant Mae Templeton. Their September issue is back to its more usual variety and includes part of a letter from Erick Greene, which you can read elsewhere in this issue of our own newsletter. --- New Brunswick Naturalist carries a feature on Fredericton Wild Life Management Area; 120h close to city centre which offers a quiet, natural place for citizens, and protection to the wildlife occurring there.

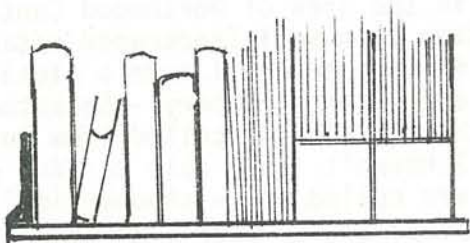
- NEXUS, from the Atlantic Centre for the Environment presents the background and aspects on the present and future of George's Bank fishing rights. Other items pertinent to the Atlantic Seaboard are also included.

ART OF INTERPRETATION -

Many of the original paintings, tapestries, etc., commissioned by Parks Canada for their interpretation centres in the maritimes, will be exhibited this winter in the gallery at the Archives of Nova Scotia on University Avenue.

The exhibit, which opens on 29 November, will run through December, January and February. Detailed information will be available shortly; watch for it.

on the shelf



- To revert to the subject of DUNES (see field trip report elsewhere in the newsletter) there is an informative and very readable essay from the Department of Lands and Forests, now on the Library Shelf. This essay on dune dynamics emphasizes the importance of the dunes and their extreme sensitivity.

- Peggy's Cove Preservation Society has published a neat little information booklet to familiarise visitors to Peggy's with the various aspects that make the area such a special place. IT DOESN'T ALWAYS BLOW IN PEGGY'S COVE is compiled from reports of an environmental study carried out by two N.S. College of Art and Design students. You are welcome to borrow HFN's copy or you may like to spend \$1.50 and get your own from Pair of Trindles Bookstore.

- N.S. CONSERVATION is an informative little journal put out quarterly by the Dept. of Lands and Forests, the content being all provincial. We have several on the shelf but you can get on the mailing list by writing to:

Editor, N.S. Conservation
P.O. Box 68, Truro, N.S., B2N 5B8
for your own 'freebie'.

- NATURE CANADA summer issue contains a plea for help in saving the Piping Plover, with particular emphasis on the problem in PEI. The situation is not improving and on the Island the Piping Plover has now been transferred from the threatened to the endangered list.

- Newsletters from other naturalist groups continue to arrive and all contain items worth reading. - St. John's Naturalist Club issue presents Art Gilligan's touching poem "Ballad of a Polluted Coast" plus... an item on camels! --- Larry Bogan of Blomidon Field Naturalists instructs us on how to locate Halley's Comet this winter, illustrated by the appropriate areas of night sky at various times. --- And the August issue of Catherine Traill Naturalists' Club newsletter is more than usually interesting - it is devoted entirely to detailed reports from participants in their Newfoundland Workshop which was held at Memorial University from July 17-26. A captivating look at the many aspects of life in Newfoundland, illustrated by the cutest thumbnail sketches by participant Mae Templeton. Their September issue is back to its more usual variety and includes part of a letter from Erick Greene, which you can read elsewhere in this issue of our own newsletter. --- New Brunswick Naturalist carries a feature on Fredericton Wild Life Management Area; 120h close to city centre which offers a quiet, natural place for citizens, and protection to the wildlife occurring there.

- NEXUS, from the Atlantic Centre for the Environment presents the background and aspects on the present and future of George's Bank fishing rights. Other items pertinent to the Atlantic Seaboard are also included.

ART OF INTERPRETATION -

Many of the original paintings, tapestries, etc., commissioned by Parks Canada for their interpretation centres in the maritimes, will be exhibited this winter in the gallery at the Archives of Nova Scotia on University Avenue.

The exhibit, which opens on 29 November, will run through December, January and February. Detailed information will be available shortly; watch for it.

Mists and moisture create a land of strange enchantment

By Mike Rosen

ONE OF the first things that struck me when I moved from Quebec to the Atlantic provinces 10 years ago was the forests. Living in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, I have become intrigued by the widespread yet rarely mentioned variant of the boreal northern and Acadian forests that prevail here. I call it the "fog forest".

Canada's Atlantic coast is often engulfed in fog, especially during the colder months when cold air masses pass over warmer ocean waters. Generally, the closer an area is to saltwater, the more fog it experiences; some headlands are enveloped in fog most of the time. Although the forests in these places do not receive more rainfall than stands farther inland, they are nevertheless more moist. The mist may not penetrate the soil deeply, but its presence over long periods of time provides ample airborne moisture for the lichens and mosses which depend on it. In the case of lichens, most of which experience no dieback during the winter and may resume activity whenever the temperature is above freezing, conditions here are ideal.

Strangely, these fog forests bring to mind improbable places thousands of miles away in very different settings: tropical cloud forests. These are lush, green stands of humid woodland that flank mountains and ring the tops of dormant volcanoes in central Africa, Central America, and other hot and humid regions. In the kinds of life they harbour and indeed in most aspects of their ecology, the two forest types are as different as forests half a world apart can be. Yet the similarities, largely due to an abundance of lichens and mosses draped from the limbs of relatively small trees, are surprising. In effect, the large amount of moisture in gentle mist form (in contrast to the frequent torrential downpours of rain forests) has imposed a superficial resemblance on two basically different ecosystems.

The fog forest, like fog itself, has ill-defined boundaries and does not conform to forest types described in biology texts. Its distribution along the coastal regions of the Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Maine is patchy — it appears as a fringe of forest lining a deep cove, or on a rocky spur exposed to the sea. In these locations the fog, produced just offshore and impeded in its movement inland by the land's rise, piles up for long periods. Normally a few hours pass before the sun burns it off or the winds move it away; occasionally the fog remains for days and even weeks, continuously misting the plants living there.

After years of growing under such conditions, the forest regions of this part of Canada — boreal in Newfoundland and Quebec and Acadian in the Maritimes — give rise to something else that sets these misty woods apart. Plant species that thrive on abundant atmospheric moisture explode in numbers and growth, in turn encouraging animals that depend on them. Other wildlife normally found in the boreal and Acadian forests is less visible, unable to survive the competition for limited resources or discouraged by excessive moisture.

Additional factors help in making the fog forest. The Atlantic coast is relatively new land, still rebounding from the weight of glaciers that melted as recently as 8,000 years ago. The retreat of the ice has not allowed enough time to establish a significant layer of soil, so plants here must live with a poor nutrient supply and weak anchorage against strong winds. Winds flail at the vegetation for days at a time, depositing sea salt which further spoils the thin soil. Rainfall, excluding moisture from fog, is substantial, causing nutrients to leach out of the earth; and poor drainage causes the water to puddle beneath the ground surface in many places, keeping the soil and its thatch-like cover of needles and other plant debris soaked.

Which are the hardy denizens of this inhospitable setting? There are the trees, of course. The most prominent by sheer abundance are conifers, an ancient group whose seeds are borne in cones. Balsam fir and one of two spruce species — red spruce in the Maritimes and black in Newfoundland and Quebec — are by far the most common, outnumbering all other species combined. They thrive on the conditions found in the fog forests — thin soils, exposed bedrock, strong salty winds and cool blankets of fog — and their fallen needles contribute healthy doses of acids to the forest floor, which favours the germination of their own seeds and discourages most others.

Other than their reduced height, however, the trees themselves are not unusual. It is their adornments — the lichens that take hold on their limbs and trunks — that set these conifers apart from their inland cousins.

In locations particularly well-endowed with fog, hanging lichens drape from almost every branch and twig, needled or bare. Old man's beard, a greenish-gray variety, and dark-brown mare's tail are two lichen species often found together in great profusion. They lend bands of light and dark to dead limbs that would otherwise be devoid of visible life. Their tendency to choose dead branches often leads people to the wrong conclusion: that the lichens themselves have done the killing. In fact, they are more abundant here because of the higher light levels permitted by the absence of tree foliage. Like all green plants, lichens (or rather their algal component) need sunlight to make their food. In eastern Canada where the spruce budworm has denuded millions of fir and spruce, conditions are at present better than usual for them.

Other kinds of lichens plaster tree trunks, rocks and even the soil. The various reindeer or caribou mosses —

they are actually lichens — are among the more common ground-living species. In open patches of woodland they take over from true mosses, because they can better withstand dryness induced by stronger sunlight. Like many lichens, reindeer moss becomes tinder-dry and brittle after a dry spell, but the first mist makes it supple again. As their name suggests, these species as a group are an important food for caribou, and they fed the herds of woodland caribou which once grazed throughout the Atlantic provinces and northeastern United States.

Healthy lichens are a good sign. On the whole they are particularly sensitive to many of man's wastes, and can serve as early indicators of hazardous conditions. Sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and various heavy metals accumulate in lichens and kill them at concentrations well below what is harmful to people. This is why lichen growth on trees in urban areas is reduced — burning gasoline and furnace oil increases harmful sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide levels in the air. Reduced lichen growth would not be so serious were it restricted to metropolitan areas, whose natural spaces suffer for many other reasons; unfortunately, it now extends beyond the cities. As studies have revealed, acids in precipitation fall thousands of kilometres from their source in industrial centres and are a major threat to the forests of the northeast.

The abundance of another group of primitive plants — fungi — brings out another characteristic of the fog forest: low light levels. In a dense stand of stunted fir and spruce the forest floor can be too dark even for lichens and mosses. Sometimes only fungi can survive because, unlike plants, they do not rely on light to make the food that supplies their energy. Instead, as agents of decomposition, fungi nourish themselves on twigs, needles and other organic matter fallen from above, thereby initiating the long, complex process that converts this debris back into life-giving nutrients for the higher plants.

Many fungi on the fog forest's lower levels are freakish and dazzling, often providing the only spark of colour to otherwise sombre surroundings. Some

species are luminescent, and one common variety gives the rotting wood on which it feeds a glowing, greenish-black hue. Others are very bright. The fruiting bodies of orange peel fungus, for example, often look like fresh, bright pieces of orange peel left by a passing hiker. Sometimes these flashy lumps emerge too late in the year and freeze in their prime, providing brilliant dashes of colour as deep into the winter as an absence of thaws will allow. But perhaps the most noticeable of the many fungi is the fly agaric (better known as a "toadstool") often standing alone like a yellow-and-orange beacon in a sea of dull green and brown.

The most ghoulish of them all may not even be a fungus, but rather an unusual higher plant called Indian pipe. At its prime, Indian pipe is an opaque bluish white, very much like milk diluted with water. It owes this hue to a complete lack of chlorophyll — a distinction it shares with few flowering plants. This unlikely-looking relative of the blueberry has beaten the problem of diminished light by deriving its food from another source: its roots are closely intertwined with the threads of a soil fungus, from which it receives nutrients the fungus has acquired by breaking down dead organic matter. Whether the Indian pipe is a parasite on the fungus, or supplies something in return, is still debated by mycologists (botanists who study fungi).

* * *

In general, it is fair to say that the ground flora of the fog forest is meagre, and for this reason so is the wildlife. Most of the animal life lives in the tree tops, where most of the vegetation is. Insects, particularly those feeding on spruce and fir needles, abound here and are preyed upon by warblers, sparrows, kinglets and thrushes. The grub looper, budworm and other insect larvae oozing from the canopy during the summer are easy forage for these birds, giving their nestlings a robust start on life, and providing them with enough fuel for a long flight south.

Some of these birds are better suited to the fog forest than to typical northeastern forests. The parula warbler is a good example: whereas southern individuals of this species use Spanish

moss to build their nests, those in the north substitute strands of old man's beard. Their habit of building their hanging nests from branches already heavily festooned with lichens provides them with perfect camouflage.

Other kinds of birds, such as the hermit thrush and Swainson's thrush, may be more common but are not often seen because of their furtive nature and nondescript plumage. Except when singing, thrushes inhabit the fog forest's lower levels, and their dusky colouration perfectly adapts them to this tier of forest life, melting them into the background of shadows, brown forest floor and dappled tree trunks; making them all but invisible to patrolling sharp-shinned hawks.

The fog forest does not boast many mammals. A fair number of species have been identified here, but populations are thin. The eaters of plants and insects are naturally the most common, so the red squirrel, whose diet can consist almost entirely of cones, might be considered mammalian king here. But the rightful epithet of "king" must go to the moose, somehow, incredibly, manoeuvring its huge bulk quietly between the skinny trees.

What the fog forest would be like without the occasional glimpse of a high-stepping moose, or the lazy, raspy song of the black-throated green warbler, is almost impossible to imagine. The jolt to the mind would be no less if the trees themselves, or the ever-present webs between their close-set trunks, were removed. Because all of these things, like the morning mist and the distant cries of gulls, are integral components of the fog forest.

Together they create an environment that is enchanted; a place where your thoughts, like the mingled scents of balsam resin and spruce gum, can float on a salty breeze. ♦

Mike Rosen is an interpretation specialist with Parks Canada in Dartmouth, NS.

The above article was taken from the Summer issue of Canadian Geographic.



field trips

PLANT LIFE OF THE CITY

Date: Saturday, 21 September 1985. Participants: 14
 Site: From N.S. Museum parking lot to Camp Hill Cemetery,
 to various driveways and parking lots.
 Guide: Pierre Taschereau
 Weather: Sunny and very warm - 27°C

Our exploration of city plant life began in the parking lot of NSM where Pierre remarked that the majority of trees in Halifax are not native, but imported from Europe. He pointed out the three large and old crack willow trees - so named because their twigs crack off easily in a high wind and thus facilitate propagation.

The European linden trees by the iron fence were noted for their black, sooty looking leaves, a condition caused by the honeydew-like substance excreted by aphids which causes soot and pollution to stick to the leaves and provides a feast for the ants.

Pierre then drew our attention to the tall European ash trees on the northeast corner of Summer and Robie Streets, their bark covered with green lichen (*Licnora* sp.) which looks as though it has been painted on, and is most evident after rain. Nearby a group of inky cap or shaggy mane mushrooms surrounded an old stump. These are edible but not delicious!

Next Pierre gave each of us a very useful printed list of more than 100 common weeds to be found in Halifax lawns, along margins and on open waste areas. We crossed the street to Camp Hill Cemetery in search of many of these weeds. First we examined the old and magnificent beech tree standing a little north of the central

To accommodate cars, a wide gravelled carpark has been made the full length of the beach. This includes the old railway track recently removed. Future plans include toilet and canteen facilities and a picnic area at the far end of the carpark. We may lose the near-primitive look of Lawrencetown Beach but if more people are attracted to this beach and it relieves pressure on some of the other dune systems - such as Conrad's Beach - from intense recreational use, then the commercial angle would be bearable, particularly if executed as discreetly as at Clam Harbour.

We noted with pleasure that despite the sand removal of the 30's, the beach is slowly rejuvenating. Hopefully the dune protection program will help the process by slowing down the wind so that sand is dropped and will collect and once more cover the exposed stones in front of the dunes.

We ate our lunch in the comfort of the car, and drank some of the hot cider Filip had brought for the anticipated workforce. Never mind, perhaps Lands and Forests will let us try again in the near future. Much remains to be done and quite a few HFN'ers have expressed a feeling that we should "do something useful" in the community apart from enjoying our field trips. Perhaps we could prepare better next time and round up some male muscle for the heavier work while we gals do whatever is needed in the way of lighter tasks to bolster the efforts of the men.

Doris Butters.

NEXT DEADLINE

25 JANUARY, 1986, for the March issue. Mail contributions to the N.S. Museum, OR phone the Editor at 463-0033.

La Fermentation

Sir,
There's yeasts in sausage and yeasts in ham.
Yeasts in honey and strawberry jam,
But none of these media can compare
With the consequence de la vie sans air.

There's yeasts in bottles and yeasts in/ flasks,
Yeasts in barrels and yeasts in casks.
We've beer in plenty and beer to spare
As a consequence de la vie sans air.

There's yeasts imperfect and yeasts with/ spores
(Hats and needles in twos and fours),
Celibate yeasts, and yeasts that pair
As a consequence de la vie sans air.
pp.

There's shadowy yeasts, both pink and white-
And I have a yeast that is black as night--
But colour isn't as grave an affair
As the consequence de la vie sans air
adagio

I think in terms

(when I think at all)

That are saccharomy --

(cetological)

But I've reached the stage when I don't
much care

As a consequence de la vie.....
la vie sans air!

Yours faithfully

Ralph A. Lewin

(Reprinted from Chemistry and Industry 1963. The poem was submitted by R.A. Lewin of Scripps Institution of Oceanography after reading an announcement that an International Symposium on Fermentation was to be held)

WEATHERWISE -

From St. John's Naturalists Club newsletter come the following old axioms regarding winter weather

"Onion's skin, very thin - mild winter coming in; Onion's skin thick and tough - coming winter cold and rough".

"Many hips and haws, many frosts and snaws".

"Warm autumn, long winter"

"Clear autumn, windy winter".

"As September, so the coming March".



generally I think you will find the weather in the March issue