

Halifax Field Naturalists Newsletter

MARCH-APRIL-MAY, 1988

No. 51

W-E P-R•O-U-D-L-Y P-R•E-S-E-N-T

("Ta-a-a-R-a-a-a-h")

HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS LONG AWAITED

LOGO-O-O-O-O-O-O!!



Thank you, Stephanie Robertson!

Halifax Field Naturalists

OBJECTIVES: To encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history, both within the membership of HFN and in the public at large. To represent the interests of naturalists by encouraging the conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources.

MEETINGS: First THURSDAY of every month at 8.00 pm in the Auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax.

FIELD TRIPS are held at least once a month *****and it is appreciated if those travelling in someone else's car share the cost of the gas.

MEMBERSHIP 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. Current membership dues are \$7.00 for an individual, \$10.00 for a family and \$15.00 for a sustaining membership. As and from the 1 January 1989, in accordance with a decision made at the 1988 Annual General Meeting, the fees will be increased as follows:

Individual ...	\$10.00	per year
Family ...	\$15.00	" "
Supporting ...	\$20.00	" "

All memberships cover HFN fiscal year ... JANUARY 1 to DECEMBER 31.
Members receive HFN Newsletter and notices of all meetings, field trips and special programs.

EXECUTIVE 1988:

President	Michael Downing	823-2081
Treasurer	Bernice Moores	422-5292
Secretary	Ursula Grigg	455-8160

DIRECTORS 1988: Bonita Baker, Doris Butters, Pat Cunningham, Maud C. Godfrey, Doug Linzey, Sifford Pearre, Stephanie Robertson, Clarence Stevens, Colin Stewart.

NUMBERS TO CALL:

Newsletter: Editor	Doris Butters	422-6286
Assistant Editor ...	Ursula Grigg	455-8160
Editorial Staff.	Edna Staples, Marjorie Hanson and John Strong	

Program Committee:	Stephanie Robertson	422-6366
	Milton & Norma Gregg	454-0187
	Lesley Butters	422-4855

Bird Atlas Co-ordinator	Clarence Stevens	469-6144
-----------------------------------	------------------	----------

Publicity (pro tem)	Doug Linzey	445-4943
Public Service Announcements	Doris Butters	422-6286

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

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

5
Halifax Field Naturalists
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
For the Year Ended December 31, 1987
(Unaudited)

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1986</u>
Receipts:		
Membership dues	\$ 1,591.00	\$ 1,475.00
Interest income	107.69	132.24
	<u>\$ 1,698.69</u>	<u>\$ 1,607.24</u>
Expenditures:		
Meeting expenses	\$ 128.07	\$ 105.03
Publications and stationery	124.75	254.84
Postage	580.15	660.06
Dues - Canadian Nature Federation	30.00	30.00
Donation - Canadian Nature Federation	20.00	25.00
Donation - South Moresby Fund	- -	100.00
Dues - Recreational Association of Nova Scotia	40.00	- -
Projects - Science Fair	54.00	47.00
Projects - Piping Plover	17.12	- -
Trails conference	40.00	- -
Logo	74.64	- -
Life membership - Doris Butters	54.64	- -
Framing gift to Filip Volckaert	- -	45.93
Insurance	210.00	- -
Workshop - How to Promote Your Organization	96.00	- -
Bank charges	66.55	63.30
	<u>\$ 1,535.92</u>	<u>\$ 1,331.16</u>
Excess of receipts over disbursements	\$ 162.77	\$ 276.08
Other Revenue (See Note 1)	1,985.42	- -
Surplus account balance at beginning of year	2,562.51	2,286.43
Surplus account balance at end of Year	<u>\$ 4,710.70</u>	<u>\$ 2,562.51</u>
Consisting of:		
Petty cash	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Current account (See Note 2)	2,173.31	232.81
Savings account	2,512.39	2,304.70
	<u>\$ 4,710.70</u>	<u>\$ 2,562.51</u>

Signed *Lorne G. Shearer*
Treasurer

Accounts Comments

I have prepared, without audit, the above Statement of Receipts and Disbursements of Halifax Field Naturalists for the year ended December 31, 1987 from the records of the Society and other information supplied to me by the Treasurer.

G. K. Ballin
Chartered Accountant

Halifax, Nova Scotia
February 25, 1988

Halifax Field Naturalists
Notes to Financial Statement
For the year ended December 31, 1987
(Unaudited)

1. OTHER REVENUE

Contract with City of Halifax for plant identification and labelling at Halifax Public Gardens

Progress payment received		\$ 3,750.00
Materials and installation costs	\$ 3,190.31	
Less - Account payable	<u>1,425.73</u>	<u>1,764.58</u>
Excess of receipts over disbursements		<u>\$ 1,985.42</u>

The aforementioned contract, the total of which is \$ 5,000.00, will be completed in 1988.

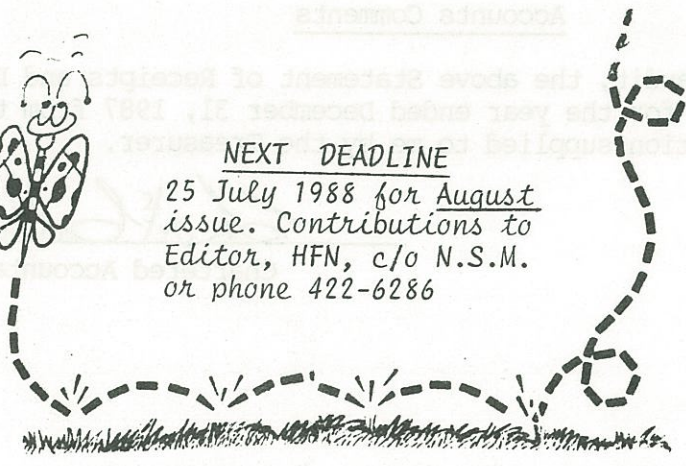
2. CURRENT BANK ACCOUNT

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1986</u>
Operating account balance	\$ 187.89	\$ 232.81
City of Halifax project balance	<u>1,985.42</u>	<u>- -</u>
	<u>\$ 2,173.31</u>	<u>\$ 232.81</u>

Subsequent to December 31, 1987 disbursement of funds to discharge the \$1425.73 account payable specified in Note 1, the City of Halifax project balance will be reduced to \$559.69, which represents the actual net revenue realized on such project for the subject fiscal year.



NEXT DEADLINE
25 July 1988 for August
issue. Contributions to
Editor, HFN, c/o N.S.M.
or phone 422-6286



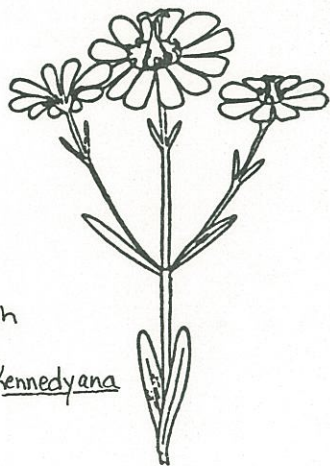
PARKS and SPECIAL PLACES -

National and provincial parks and preservation and protection for special places has been much in the news lately.

In mid-April, Lands and Forests Minister Jack MacIsaac introduced five bills as part of the Buchanan government's new Parks Policy. One bill before the Legislature is an Official Tree Act - proposing to designate the Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*) as Nova Scotia's official tree.

A bulky document sent to HFN at the end of April detailed the provincial government's proposals on its new Parks and Beaches Legislation. This document approved in the main by Michael Downing and Colin Stewart is now being scrutinised with minute care.

The proposed legislation follows the Lands and Forests Steering Committee hearings held in January last, during which HFN presented a 20page brief.



Plymouth
Gentian
Sabatia Kennedyana

Meanwhile, in Ottawa federal Environment Minister Tom McMillan presented for second reading Bill C-30 which proposes 37 major amendments to the National Parks Act, "strengthening protection for all natural features, legislating wilderness zones within national parks and enabling the establishment of a citizen's fund to help acquire new parks or upgrade existing parks".

But as Colin pointed out when offering tentative approval of Nova Scotia's new parks and beaches legislation - "Beach protection law was introduced in 1977 but never proclaimed" something he hopes will not be repeated.



Pink
Coreopsis
Coreopsis rosea

However, to end on a positive note - On Sunday, May 1, 1988, NOVA SCOTIA'S FIRST NATURE RESERVE was officially designated under the Special Places Act.

The Ecological Reserve is comprised of about 50 acres in the Tusket River valley. The soil around Wilson's Lake is of ancient glacial deposits providing a suitable location for some of the rarest plants in Canada - Plymouth gentian, pink coreopsis and water pennywort.

Purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Wildlife Habitat of Canada, the land was deeded to the province and will be looked after by the Department of Education with the assistance of Lands and Forests.

Sunday's ceremony was held in Tusket Court House (the oldest courthouse in Canada) and attended by 100 people; ministers, municipal officials, landowners and representatives of all the concerned groups who had fought so hard to get the area protected.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

to LARRY and EDNA STAPLES on the safe arrival of MARK JOSEPH, who weighed in at 6lbs 9ozs on Tuesday, April 19, 1988.

Hopefully, before too long Mum will be able to find the time to continue her participation in the production of HFN's newsletter. Edna has been our Editorial Right Hand and Page Arranger for several years past.

REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR 1988::: WINNERS OF HFN PRIZES.

John van der Meer, HFN's judge in the Natural History section of the Fair, expressed disappointment that much more emphasis was placed on pure science than on natural history. However, he was most impressed by the excellence of the exhibits to which he awarded prizes and the extensive knowledge shown by the students themselves.

John hopes to be able to arrange for the prize winners to present and display their models and speak at an HFN meeting in the very near future.

Both of our selections were first class winners in the Regionals and will be going to the Canada Finals in Winnipeg. Congratulations and Good Luck!

CURTIS KEITH, Gr.12, Dartmouth High School and STEPHEN COMEAU, Gr. 12, Cole Harbour High School, for their work on "Zeolite zoning in lavas of Nova Scotia"; and

MARY JANE BURRIS, Gr.8, Musquodoboit Rural High, for continuation of her red fox project - "Vocalisation of the Red Fox". Mary Jane was an HFN nature prize winner last year.

WELCOME TO ALL NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS -

Bonita Baker
 Scott Cunningham
 Sue Kent
 Rick Swain
 Sheila Cole
 Deanne Sullivan-Fraser
 Martine Dufresne
 Yvon LeBlanc and Sandi Zinn
 Catherine and Graeme Bethune
 Mark Josselyn
 Tricia Renée Munro
 Nelson Poirer
 Shirley van Nostrand
 Mary Jane Burris
 Curtis Keith and Stephen Comeau

ENVIRONMENT WEEK
30 MAY to 5 JUNE 1988.

Notices

Notices

Theme: "OUR COMMON FUTURE!"

Canadians will give their oceans, woods, lakes, tundra, coasts and mountains special attention during ENVIRONMENT WEEK. We're extremely fortunate to have so much unspoiled land, but we have to be careful! Nature has to be managed, especially in those cases where man has not been kind to Mother Earth,

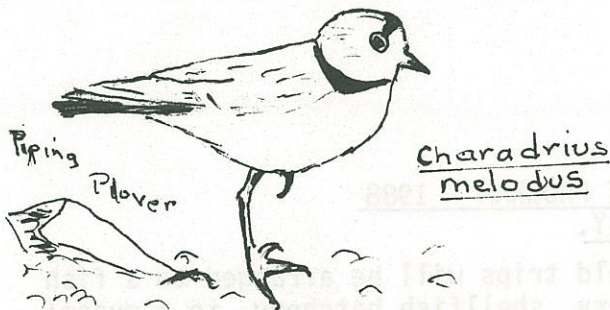
Listen to the radio, read about nature, become an 'active' nature-lover. This is your opportunity to get involved. The Halifax Field Naturalists will be taking part in a week of activities throughout Nova Scotia.

On Sunday, 29 May, at 1.00 pm HFN invites you to the unveiling of the Piping Plover sign at Conrad Beach, to be followed by an interpreted trip of the habitat of the Piping Plover.

On Tuesday, 31 May at 6.15 pm Bill Freedman will guide a special family trip around the Frog Pond (for details see HFN program).

HFN has prepared a poster and brochure with a summary of all Environment Week events in Nova Scotia. For information call Nova Scotia Museum, 429-4610, or pick up posters/brochures at the front desk of the N.S. Museum 1747 Summer Street, Halifax.

COME ON ! GET INVOLVED!!!



WILDLIFE '87 - GAINING MOMENTUM -

Although Wildlife '87 is officially over, HFN has continued with the two projects undertaken by the Club.

We found it necessary to do more research on the survey of Conrad Beach and Island, especially in the aquatic area, which means one or two more field trips during the summer season; hopefully by early fall we shall have 'got it all together'. Meanwhile, the work of compiling the information obtained to date, plus the flora and fauna list, is well under way.

The second Wildlife '87 project will be concluded in time for Environment Week, on May 29, 1988, with the unveiling of the information sign and its appeal to visitors to help protect the breeding sites of Piping Plovers on Conrad Beach.

A large, aluminum, easily read sign (hopefully vandal-proof) was designed and obtained by Clarence Stevens and his team of Stephanie Robertson, Doug Linzey and Bonita Baker. A site near the carpark at Conrad's was selected and the ground prepared. The result of their efforts will be on view on SUNDAY, MAY 29, at 1.00 pm, when the plaque will be unveiled.

Lands and Forests staff members will be invited and local residents who have shown their interest in both the Survey and the Piping Plover Project.

!! EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY !!**MARITIME BREEDING BIRD ATLAS**

The Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas has just completed two very successful years of this five-year project. Over 500 volunteers are participating, having contributed more than 21,000 records to date.

As of September 1988, we will require a new coordinator. This is a full-time paid position based in Halifax.

Duties include supporting and managing the activities of a large group of volunteers and assuming responsibility for the Atlas data.

If this position interests you, please write to:-

Selection Committee
Maritimes Bird Atlas Trust
c/o Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street
Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6.

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY AQUACULTURE PROGRAM - 1988
22 JUNE to 22 JULY.

Want to start an aquaculture business, or to learn more about aquaculture?

If so, the Centre for Continuing Studies at Henson College is offering an introductory course designed to familiarise participants with the various forms of aquaculture including: Salmon, Trout, Oyster and Mussel Cultivation. Topics will cover facility design, nutrition and diet, fish diseases, insurance, marketing and permit application.

Field trips will be arranged to a fish hatchery, shellfish hatchery, to a mussel farm, trout farm, salmon farm and an aquaculture fair.

The course starts on Wednesday, June 22, and registration is limited to 20 people. Lectures are held on Wednesday evenings and field trips on Saturdays from 9am to 5pm.
REGISTRATION - Call 424-2375
MORE INFORMATION - Call Chris Corkett, 7016. 424-7016.

(Chris will be giving a slide/talk on aquaculture to HFN members at the regular monthly meeting on Thursday, June 2, at 8pm).

TERRESTRIAL BIOLOGY: DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY - 1988
SUMMER COURSE.

An Introductory Course in Terrestrial Biology is the theme of one of the courses offered this summer by Dalhousie's Department of Biology. Running from June 8 to June 29, this course should be of special interest to naturalists, parents, teachers, senior citizens and others who may want to increase their knowledge and enjoyment of nature and the outdoors.

It can be taken as a half credit towards an Honours or Major in Biology at the University, and no previous courses are necessary. Anyone preferring to audit the course is welcome to do so.

Registration is limited to 25 students. The course is a residential one and accommodation will be available at reasonable rates at a Dal Hall of Residence.

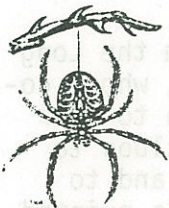
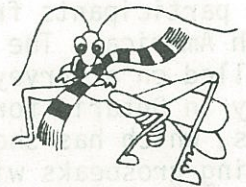
The program will include theory and laboratory/field trips. Topics include:

Theory

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| <u>Week 1.</u> | 1. Flowering plants
2. Conifers
3. Ferns and fern allies
4. Lichens, mosses and liverworts |
| <u>Week 2.</u> | 1. Mammals
2. Birds
3. Reptiles
4. Amphibians |
| <u>Week 3.</u> | 1. Insects and Arachnids
2. Myriapods
3. Crustaceans and Molluscs
4. Annelids |

Laboratory/Field Trip

- | |
|---|
| Field - old-growth trees
Lab - forest flora
Field - lakeside and stream
Lab - lower plant groups |
| Field - animal signs and live-trapping
Field - birds of forest and field
Field - snake, frog, and salamander habitats
Lab - observation, terraria, vivaria |
| Field - habits of insects and spiders
Field - anthropogenic habitats
Lab - centipedes, millipedes, and sowbugs
Lab - slugs, land snails, and earthworms. |



Course Instructor will be Pierre Taschereau. Ph.D., assisted by guest speakers from the Natural History Section of the Nova Scotia Museum who will lecture in their respective fields.

PIERRE TASCHEREAU is a well-known member of Halifax Field Naturalists, with a life-long interest in natural history. As a student working part-time at the NSM when it was on Spring Garden Road, he took groups of schoolchildren on regular nature walks. In 1967 he was active in the Dalhousie Biology Club, and later with Dalhousie Field Naturalists, predecessors of the present HFN. Pierre's knowledge and expertise is also much appreciated in the Universal Unitarian Church when he takes his fellow-members on nature field trips.

-oOo-

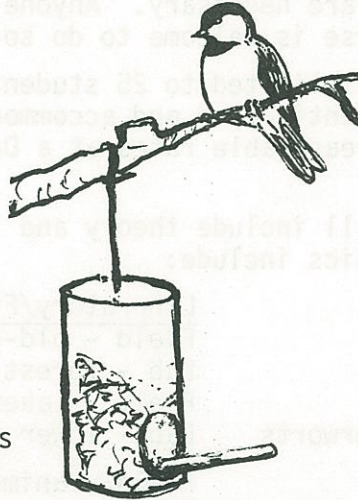
For more information on admission, registration and course description write to: The Chairman, Department of Biology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4J1

CALLING ALL BIRD FEEDER WATCHERS!

Have you ever wondered where the birds at your feeder come from, where they go when they leave, and why bird numbers change from year to year? Do you want to know what birds come to feeders in different parts of North America? PROJECT FEEDERWATCH is a new continent-wide survey of bird feeders designed to help answer questions such as these, and you are invited to join.

Project FeederWatch is a cooperative research venture of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory, and is in the midst of a successful pilot year with 4000 participants from all across North America. The project is modelled on a survey run successfully in Ontario for the past 11 years, which has shown that male evening grosbeaks winter farther south than females, black-capped chickadees are found in low numbers when evening grosbeaks are abundant, and numbers of many species at feeders parallel those found on Christmas Bird Counts.

Sound interesting? Project FeederWatch needs thousands of additional observers across the continent to help answer questions about feeder birds on a broad geographic scale. You need not be an expert birder in order to take part -- the project concentrates on common species, and baffling rarities can be ignored. Although counts are made over a one- to two-day period of your choice every other week from November through March, you are not obliged to watch every time, nor must you watch continuously on count days. All observations are recorded on computer-readable forms so that detailed summaries can be provided to participants promptly each season and to ensure that the data are readily available for further analysis.



In return for your observations, Project FeederWatch will send you an annual newsletter and report on the season's results plus two issues of "Birdscope", the Laboratory of Ornithology's research newsletter.

If you can't take part but would like to receive these publications anyway, you may subscribe to them separately.

Project FeederWatch requires an annual registration fee of \$9.00 (Canadian), which helps to pay for data forms, analysis and preparation and mailing of reports and newsletters.

To join, please write to :-

Erica Dunn, Coordinator
Project FeederWatch
Long Point Bird Observatory
P.O. Box 160
Port Rowan
Ontario, NOE 1M0.

Include your name and address, state whether you wish to contribute observations from your feeder, or just to receive reports, and enclose your cheque for \$9.00

(made payable to 'Project FeederWatch'). Please sign up right away, to help them plan how many forms to print and to avoid mailing delays.

You will receive all materials and instructions just before the season begins in mid-November, 1988. Project FeederWatch began in Canada. Let's keep our end up and show those to the south of us where their birds really come from!

..... The above appeal came from the Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario, whose coordinator, Erica Dunn, has written to over 700 naturalists' groups and bird clubs to publicise the project more widely and to ask for their help. The request is printed now to allow plenty of time for interested people to sign up before the survey begins in the fall.....

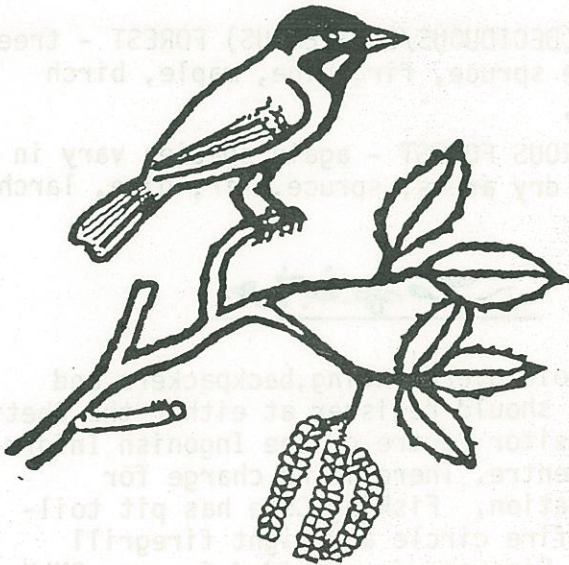
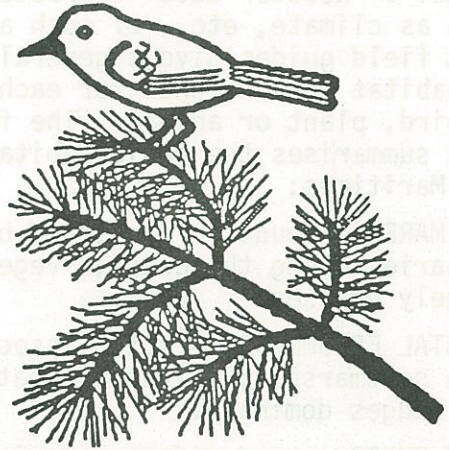


ORNITHOLOGY! ORNITHOLOGY!! ORNITHOLOGY!!!

The Society of Canadian Ornithologists is conducting a membership drive. SCO was formed in 1982 in conjunction with the Canadian hosting of the XIX International Ornithological Congress in Ottawa in June 1986. Since its inception membership has grown to over 150 members and the Society now publishes *Picoides*, the Bulletin of SCO, twice a year.

Objectives of the SCO are to promote ornithology in Canada, whether it is enjoyed by amateurs or professionals, and to provide a common voice and information exchange for persons interested in birds.

The organization would like your support. Should you be interested, send your remittance (\$10.00) to Philip Stepney Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845-102, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 0M6.



ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE -

The XX International Ornithological Congress will take place in Christchurch, New Zealand from 2-9 December, 1990. Preliminary notices have already been sent out.

Professor Charles G. Sibley of San Francisco State University, California, is President and Dr. Ben D. Bell of Victoria University, Wellington, N.Z., is Secretary-General. The anticipated Congress program will include plenary lectures, symposia, contributed papers (spoken and posters), workshops, discussion groups and films. There will be a mid-Congress excursion day, and pre- and post-Congress excursions are planned to interesting ornithological sites in New Zealand and adjacent regions. For information write to: Dr. Ben D. Bell, Secretary-General, XX International Ornithological Congress, Dept. of Zoology, Victoria University of Wellington, Private Bag, Wellington, New Zealand.

MARITIME BREEDING BIRD ATLAS -

The time is nigh for another season of atlassing and to refresh memories or clarify the meaning of "habitat" for newcomers, We repeat below the list of definitions published a year or so ago.

What is a Habitat?

According to the Oxford Dictionary its "the natural home of plant or animal". Webster adds "characteristics, such as climate, etc., of such a region" Most field guides give a general outline of habitat requirements for each species of bird, plant or animal. The following list summarises the basic habitats of the Maritimes:

SALTMARSH - found in sheltered bays/ estuaries along the coast; vegetation largely grasses.

COASTAL FRESHMARSH - often associated with saltmarshes; bulrushes, cattails and sedges dominate.

SAND DUNES - sand ridges colonised by beach grass and eventually heath and bog plants.

FRESHWATER POND - small, shallow body of freshwater; plants include cattails, bulrushes, waterlily and pondweed.

FRESHWATER LAKE - open water with edges subject to wave action; waterlily, loose-strife found here, with shrubs and scrub forest at edges.

AROUND THE HIGHLANDS - (from Elaine Wallace, of Cape Breton Highlands National Park) -

Interested in backpacking or camping? Have you tried Fishing Cove Wilderness Hiking Trail in Cape Breton? From the top of MacKenzie Mountain the trail leads 8 km through a typical Acadian Forest, and for part of the way hugs the edge of the rugged Fishing Cove river. Waterfalls can also be seen along the way.

Bald eagles can be seen soaring above and when the surf is not too rough, schools of whales are often spotted. One can swim from the beach, or (with a valid park fishing license) fish for trout in the river.

STREAMS - stream edge vegetation such as alder, and sandy banks

BOG - wetland filled or covered with peat and sphagnum moss; stunted spruce etc.

FEN - peaty wetland along lake edges and river banks; sweet gale and sedges common.

SWAMP - wetland with standing water, black spruce and fir, alder and other shrubs.

BARREN - rocky heath with dwarf shrubs and lichens.

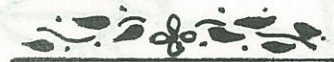
OLDFIELDS - weedy, overgrown abandoned farm fields or pasture; goldenrod, grasses, shrubs, white spruce.

CLIFFS - steep bedrock outcroppings; sea cliffs

DECIDUOUS FOREST - includes maple, oak, beech, birch trees in different associations, varying according to wet or dry areas.

MIXED (DECIDUOUS/CONIFEROUS) FOREST - trees include spruce, fir, pine, maple, birch poplar,

CONIFEROUS FOREST - again species vary in wet or dry areas; spruce, fir, pine, larch.



To avoid overcrowding, backpackers and campers should register at either the Cheticamp Visitor Centre or the Ingonish Information Centre. There is no charge for registration. Fishing Cove has pit toilets, a fire circle and eight firegrill sites. Firewood is provided for use ONLY in the firegrills.

So - if you're thinking of visiting Cape Breton this summer, this trail might prove a good one to explore.

HFN LIBRARY -

For the last several years the N.S.Museum has provided us with shelf space in the foyer to house our incoming newsletters and magazines, all of which carry worthwhile nature articles. Now, however, NSM is running out of shelf space for their own needs and can no longer provide us with a home for our magazines. So.....what to do? Most of these publications are too good to pitch out without giving HFN members a chance to look at them, so we will try putting them out on the 'bumpf' table at our monthly meetings. You are all welcome to take whatever interests you. Our thanks to NSM for their past help with this literature.

New Brunswick Naturalist had several good articles in the December 1987 issue. On rare plants of New Brunswick Hal Hinds had written about his Search for the Alpine Blueberry; Sandy Burnett wrote a story on the dangers of environmental change to the migrant shorebirds who pass through Shepody Bay, N.B.; and a thought provoking piece by the same writer - Extinct Means Gone Forever.

Vol.9, #1, the March 1988 issue of The Osprey, Newfoundland Natural History Society's quarterly publication, contains several worthwhile features - particularly the Society's Brief on Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve Act; Allan R. Stein's Report on the Submission**; items on Adaptations of the Moose to Winter Survival; and Flosculous Snippets. (!?)

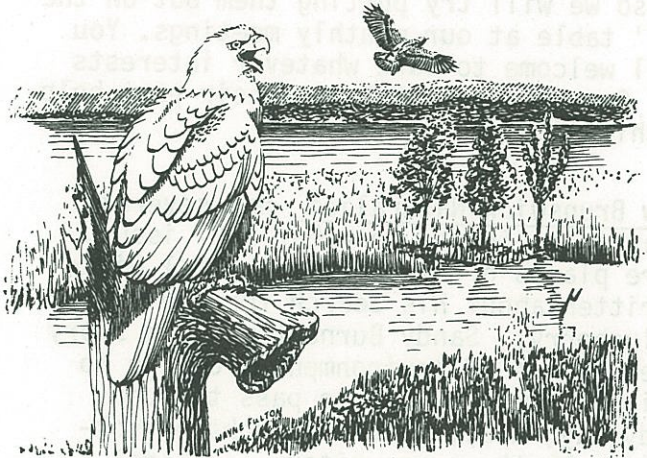
The January, February and March issues of Catherine Trill Naturalists' newsletter continue Dr. George McKiel's account of the fascination of Australia, where Dr. McKiel is on a year's Sabbatical with his wife Jean.

Nature Canada. Spring '88, includes a sprightly article by Richard Brown of the BIO on "Happiness is a Rare Bird".

**
Allan R. Stein, author of the Report on the Submission to the Public Hearings on the Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve, made some quite discerning points, and I quote:

"...At the information sessions...I was struck by the support for the Reserve, even by some who possibly thought they were speaking against it...the motherhood analogy can be used. Many said in effect, 'I support motherhood 100%, but, oh please God, don't let me be pregnant!'...With the possible exception of a prospector who seemed to demand the right to go anywhere and do anything, the other 'objectors' were in effect giving strong support for the Reserve. Thus, there were the hunters who wanted access to the heart of the area by trike because there were now too many hunters and too few moose where they used to go..... Or the trapper who shifted his trap-lines from Ocean Pond near Whitbourne because that area is now full of cabins and no furbearers remain.....Or the wood cutters and saw mill operators who said they had to have access because all the trees in the more accessible areas were cut...each confirming in his own way that if the Bay du Nord area is not protected, the very thing they wanted access to...would be destroyed, as it had been elsewhere, by exploiters..."

field trips



SUBSTITUTE FOR AN ORIENTEERING TRIP

Date: Sunday, January 10, 1988
Place: Point Pleasant Park
Leader: Etta Parker

Participants: 20

On January 10 twenty of us field naturalists met at the gates to Point Pleasant Park on Tower Road, for what was to have been an orienteering afternoon, but Etta Parker, who was to have given us the session, felt that there was just too much snow.

So we set out in small groups. Some on snowshoes, some on cross-country skis and the rest on foot. Everyone had a great time.

The park was just beautiful with so much snow on the trees and the sun casting love-

ly shadows, it certainly was a winter wonderland.

As we got closer to the beach we could see in the distance several seals lying out on the rocks. It was quite a sight. Of course a few seabirds were flying around but I don't think anyone listed them.

Etta promised that we would have our orienteering session at a later date, maybe in April. I am looking forward to it as I know very little about this subject.

Phyllis Gardiner

McNAB'S ISLAND IN THE WINTER

Date : Saturday, February 6, 1988
Place: McNab's Island, Halifax Harbour
Weather: Sunny, cold, windy - temp. -15°C.
Leader: Filip Volckaert

Participants: 29, including members of Volksmarch, Canadian Hostelling Association, and Maritime Photoguild.

We boarded the boat at 10.30 am, together with a group going whale watching off Chebucto Head. We arrived at McNab's at 11 o'clock and split up into several groups.

I joined Filip's group - our nature interpreter for this occasion. We decided to go to the coldest spot first and so headed to Fort McNab.

Filip reminded us that the island was made up of several drumlins. The sea added the beach and the dunes closing in a bay formed a freshwater lake.

We walked briskly to keep warm, while noting the many alders along the roadside. Alders usually grow in disturbed, wet places; they are able to fix atmospheric nitrogen because of the presence of nitrogen-fixing symbionts in their roots, by which soil is greatly improved.

A lot of Japanese knotweed grows along the road, the young shoots of which are edible and when cooked taste like rhubarb. We also noted rosehips on the rose bushes, and blackberry canes.

Most of the trees on the island are black spruce, but we also saw a stand of yellow birch and quite a few poplars.

At Fort McNab we focused on the whale-watchers' boat off Chebucto Head and were delighted to see some whales ourselves.

Fountains of water were shooting up again and again, and then we saw the sleek black bodies diving down for food. Whales follow the herring and feed on them. Clear, cold days are the best for watching whales.

We ate our lunch at the Fort, sharing some of our goodies and watching the whales. After lunch we walked back taking side roads to Wreck Cove and another cove.

The coves were partly covered with pancake ice. This ice is formed when slush on the water surface freezes and forms roundish pieces of different sizes, with turned up edges.

We spotted quite a few birds on the water; some of them had come from the Arctic to winter in our mild climate! Then we headed for the Tea House where a warm fire welcomed us.

While waiting for the boat that would take us back to Halifax, we watched a raven performing a somersault. Bernice explained that this is part of the raven's courtship ritual. She also compiled for us a list of the 20 species of birds we spotted during our trip.

We had a sunny, cold, but wonderfully invigorating and exciting day.

Regina Maass.

Birds seen at McNab's, Feb.6, 88 -

Common loon ; red-necked grebe ;
 great cormorant ; American black duck ;
 common golden-eye ; bufflehead ;
 red-breasted merganser ; ring-billed gull ;
 herring gull ; Iceland gull ; greater
 black-backed gull ; rock dove ; common
 raven ; American crow ; black-capped
 chickadee ; American robin ; Northern
 junco ; red crossbill ; white-winged
 crossbill ; American goldfinch.



A SEAWEED WORKSHOP

Date: Sunday, March 6, 1988 Participants: 9
Place: Life Sciences Centre, Dalhousie University
Leader: Carolyn Bird, Associate Research Officer, Atlantic
 Research Lab., National Research Council, Halifax.
Weather: About 0°C, but bright and sunny.

We met on Oxford Street and Regina led us up the path and through the intricacies of Dalhousie's Life Sciences Centre to the Lab where Carolyn was waiting for us.

Seaweeds, we learned, fall into three main categories - green (Chlorophyta), brown (Phaeophyta) and red (Rhodophyta). Chlorophyta ranges in colour from a clear pale green to dark green - but not olive; Phaeophyta from olive green to brown or yellowish brown and Rhodophyta from red to red-brown in at least the lower part of the plant; the upper portions may be bleached yellowish or greenish.

The specimens on display were freshly gathered, most of them from the bleak and icy water's edge at Peggy's Cove, and represented some of the Nova Scotia seaweeds to be found in late winter. Many of the greens have annual forms which appear at different seasons of the year. There were wide straps, narrow straps, blades and filaments; some looked like matted 'early Beatle' hairdos, others were fine and smooth. One huge round blade was pitted with small circular holes (*Agarum cribrosum*), another (*Hildenbrandia*) was like a dark slimy stain on a rock, and one (which shall remain nameless to avoid any undue embarrassment) dripped 'goo' all over the floor.

Each species of seaweed has its 'niche' from deep water to near high tide levels, often according to its capacity to withstand drying out in sun and air for several hours a day. *Desmarestia* has a pH of 2, and is so acid that when exposed in air for a prolonged period digests itself. Sea urchins do not relish it, which is probably fortunate because these creatures grazing on kelp beds have been known to destroy the nursery habitat of fish larvae and lobster.

A high spot of the afternoon was, of course, being able to look at small specimens under the lab's powerful microscopes.

Seaweeds are fascinating - for example, the bunch of hairy stuff (*Ptilota*) which is so good for the garden, showed under the 'scope as a deep pink, dainty, fern-like plant and the fine hair-like filaments of *Cladophora* proved to be a bright chain divided into segments like beads on a string.

Carolyn told us of the various ways by which seaweeds can reproduce - by spores, eggs and sperm or by vegetative means putting out tiny 'branches'. We learned some of the ways by which seaweeds attach themselves to rocks or sea-bottom - some even grow on each other - and to our great surprise found that those little bladders on *Fucus* are not there for kids to pinch and squirt water at each other, but to hold the plant up like floats on a fishnet during high tide.

Many seaweeds have commercial value, particularly those containing carrageenan used as an emulsifier in many medicines, cosmetics, jellies and milky desserts such as ice cream, etc.. Of these, Irish moss (*Chondrus crispus*) is probably the best known. One of the most common is dulse (*Rhodymenia palmata*), long used as a food in the Maritimes and parts of Europe. Several species make excellent fertiliser, particularly *Ptilota serrata*.

Two hours is certainly not sufficient to assimilate such an extensive topic, but perhaps Carolyn could be persuaded to give us another workshop or take us on a field trip to observe seaweeds in a natural habitat instead of in little plastic dishes and bowls. And, of course - there are the 'other season' seaweeds to learn about too. Thank you Carolyn.

Doris Butters.



A WINTER WALK AT DUNCANS COVE

Date: Sunday February 21, 1988
 Place: Duncans Cove, nr. Halifax. (in lieu of the sleigh ride planned, there being no snow in Middle Sackville)
 Weather: Cold and very windy
 Leader: Wolfgang Maass.

Participants: about 25

A sizeable group of rugged nature lovers went hopping down the bunny trails at Duncans Cove in February last. (Be nice if a few more fellows had turned out, to balance things a bit). A great deal of interesting conversation developed between the group and our ebullient and knowledgeable leader, Wolfgang Maass. Dr. Maass, whose home is in the Cove, commented all along the route on the history as well as on the plants and lichens of the area. He willingly answered the many questions tossed at him on this species and that.

Early in the walk while noting the various plants growing beside the trail their usefulness was discussed including the wine-making potential of rose hips and juniper berries. At one point a Daily News photographer took a group picture.

Among the lichens we noted *Cladonia mitis*, *C. stellaris* and *C. terra-novae*, the last-named more commonly known as reindeer lichen as both reindeer and caribou graze on these plants. Cladonias are probably the most familiar species of lichen; they grow in soil and over mosses. *Cladonia terra-novae* Ahti was apparently named by a fellow from Finland. In one area chemical reaction from bird droppings had turned the lichens from their natural colours to purple hues - an example of how the laws of nature do not always complement each other.

Pitcher plants were also closely observed.

Trees in this area grow sparsely, as the soil at the Cove is not rich enough for a forest to grow. Cut-and-burn activities in the past caused some soil loss so that too little could regenerate or be available for plentiful regrowth. The abundance of granite is believed to hinder conifer forests regrowth, as does the harsh weather conditions along Nova Scotia's coastline.

An eider duck and a red-necked grebe, plus a whale, were spotted by members of the group. Eiders are large, bulky diving ducks with dense down feathers which help to insulate the birds from the cold of the ocean. Red-necked grebes, rarely seen on land or in flight, have lobed toes to help in making them strong swimmers.

About 100 years ago the Cove's lifesaving station stood where the sub-division now exists. The present lighthouse is located at Chebucto Head near Duncans Cove.

After our cold and biting hike the group enjoyed a hot and tasty meal at the Sea King Motel on Bedford Highway.

'Ansel in the Attic'

Plant list -

Cladonia mitis; *C. stellaris*;
 Reindeer lichen; pitcher plants;
 Labrador tea; lambkill or sheep laurel;
 wintergreen; crowberries; cranberries;
 fox berries; blueberries; rose hips;
 juniper berries; green alder; iris.

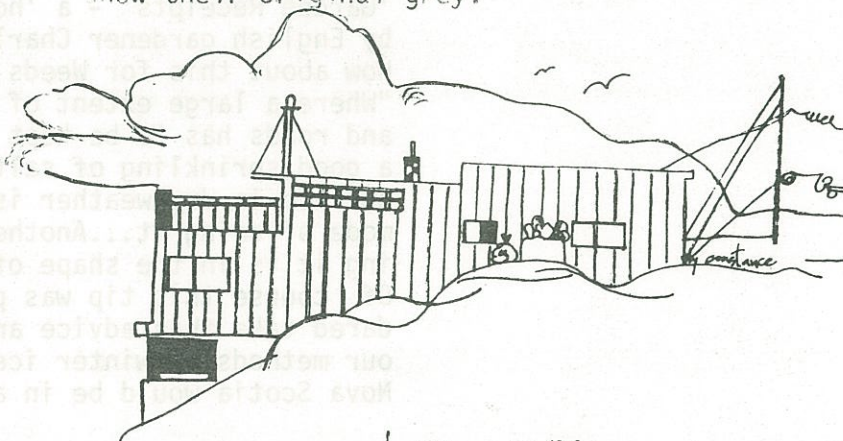
Birds -

Eider ducks; red-necked grebes

Animals -

One whale.

Bernice added a footnote --- Just offshore are a cluster of brownish rocks with grey tops. Apparently to prevent obstruction of the lighthouse beam, the tops were blasted off, and the exposed surfaces still show their original grey.



ORIENTEERING AT POINT PLEASANT PARK

Date: April 9, 1988, Saturday.
Place: Pt. Pleasant Park, with 3/4hr instruction in NSM first
Weather: Light rain, high wind
Leader: Etta Parker. Participants: 17

Although it was rainy and windy outside, the 17 participants were warm and cosy for the first three-quarters of an hour in the Boardroom of the Museum. During that time Etta Parker, who is well-qualified in orienteering, gave instruction in the type of orienteering we would be doing that day - some of us had never had any experience in the subject.

With the use of two projectors and other aids, Etta taught us how to read the maps of Point Pleasant Park (which she had obtained for us), and how to follow the clues and to recognise the markers.

Soon we were off to Tower Road parking lot. After having our starting time noted on Etta's chart, we made off with all possible speed - list of clues in one hand and Park map in the other. Most of us were trying to find first of all the markers with the highest points printed on them. In about 30 minutes several of us arrived

back at the starting point having found all the markers. The first - by a hair's breadth - was Stephen Robertson (11 years old) who displayed keen enthusiasm throughout the competition.

Having covered the route we all appreciated just how much time and effort Etta had put into the preparation of the competition. She had made all the markers by hand and had had to cover the route several times in the rain the morning of the event, to put up the markers, etc.

Etta classed this competition as an easy one - aimed at all age groups - no compass work used. All the participants enjoyed the competition and urged Etta to lead another more advanced one in the near future.

Our special thanks to Etta Parker for a job well done.

Norma Gregg



.....It has been quite a while since we used a 'filler' from the 1880 edition of 'Garden Receipts' - a 'how-to' advice book by English gardener Charles W. Quin. How about this for Weeds on Walks? ... "Where a large extent of gravel walks and roads has to be kept free from weeds a good sprinkling of salt sown over the surface in dry weather is the cheapest mode of doing it...Another way of applying it is in the shape of hot brine..." Of course this tip was pre-auto; if we dared take this advice and add it to our methods of winter ice removal, Nova Scotia would be in a real pickle!!!

TROPICAL FORESTS: THEIR FUTURE AND OURS.

by

Erick Greene

Department of Biology, Princeton
University.

(PART I)

For those who missed Erick's talk during his recent visit to Halifax, I believe it is well worth repeating. Erick Greene was a member of HFN.; his wife Anne, one of our founding members. Erick's interests encompass many aspects of biology - one of them being his concern for tropical forests. Following is a draft of Erick's talk.....

"My senses were overwhelmed. Giant trunks, festooned with clinging philodendrons and orchids, rise through many tiers of foliage to the unbroken canopy 60 metres overhead. Pencil-shafts of light pierce down into the cool dusk of the forest floor. Recurring explosions of turquoise signal the approach of a large blue morpho butterfly. A rustle alerts me to a group of javelinias, or wild pigs, foraging in the dank richness of the leaf litter. I remain still and they snort past, seemingly only interested in the grubs they are rooting up. The quiet is suddenly shattered by a squadron of macaws screaming overhead. They fly in perfect formation, with their metre-long tails trailing behind like scarlet contrails. From overhead to my left a low rumbling builds into the chorus of roaring howler monkeys. This is answered by another troop of howler monkeys to my right, quick to assert their territorial rights. A troop of capuchin monkeys erupts into frantic alarm as an ornate hawk-eagle glides through the forest on the lookout for a vulnerable baby monkey.

"Although this was a scene I witnessed recently in Costa Rica, such biological profusion is typical of tropical forests in many parts of the world. Tropical rainforests straddle the equator in a belt roughly 2500 kilometres wide. Standard Mercator projection maps give us an inflated perspective of the amount of existing tropical forests: only about 6% of the land surface on earth is covered by tropical forests. The largest remaining tracts are located in the Amazon basin (primarily in Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador and Peru), Central America (Panama to southern Mexico) equatorial Africa (Gabon, Cameroon and neighbouring countries), eastern Madagascar and southeast Asia.

"One of the most remarkable features of tropical forests is their phenomenal biological diversity. Biologists estimate that there are at least 10 million extant species, most of which are found in the tropics. This is a conservative estimate, and the figure may be as high as 50 million. Only about 1.7 million species have been described since Linnaeus began classifying organisms. Hence, most species on earth have never been named, let alone studied in any detail! In fact, at the current rate of describing species, it would take over 4,000 years to give scientific names to all species now living. These figures emphasize the importance of the tropics as the storehouse of the earth's biological diversity: over 90% of all species are packed into 6% of the earth's surface.

"The high biological diversity of the tropics can be put in perspective by comparison with more familiar temperate ecosystems. An hectare (100 by 100 metres) of rich deciduous forest in eastern Canada will contain about ten species of trees. In contrast, one hectare of prime rain forest could contain as many as 200 tree species. Any bird watcher who has been fortunate enough to spend time in the tropics can attest to the high biological diversity. Whereas in eastern North America we have just the ruby-throated hummingbird to contend with, a good flower patch in South America may feed 20 species of hummingbirds in a day. Dr. John Terborgh of Princeton University has recorded more species of birds on a small plot of rainforest in Peru than occur in all of Canada!

Tropical Forests are Disappearing.

"Tropical forests are succumbing to human encroachment at an alarming rate. These forests are disappearing at a rate of about 70,000km² per year, which is equivalent to about 4,000 hockey rinks of forest per hour.

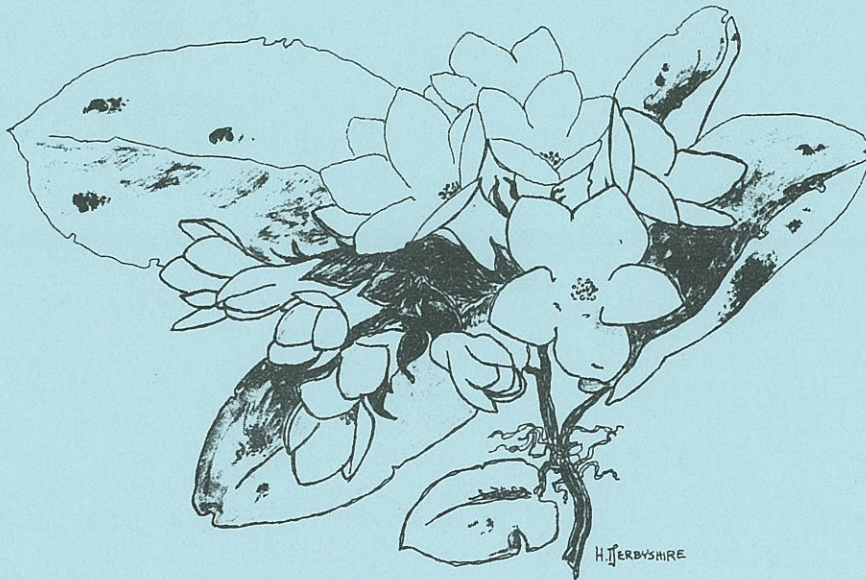
At this rate, virtually all of the earth's rainforests will be stripped bare in forty years.

"The ultimate cause of the increasing pressure upon tropical forests is the exponential increase in the number of humans on earth... During most of the time that *Homo sapiens* has existed, there have been no more than 5 million people on earth. With a few setbacks, notably the recurring bubonic plagues of the 14th to the 17th centuries, human numbers slowly increased to about 500 million by 1700. Then, in this century, the human population size has undergone unprecedented growth, surpassing the 5 billion mark in June of this year. It is this population crisis that ultimately underlies all of the proximate 'causes' of tropical deforestation.

"In Central and South America, 'slash-and-burn' land clearing is responsible for about 70% of the initial destruction of tropical forests. Families move into an area, usually after a road is cut through the forest, and fell the trees to make room for their garden plots. The main problem with this system of agriculture is that tropical soils are very thin: they become quickly depleted of nutrients and wash away with the torrential rains. The soil becomes so seriously degraded within a couple of years that the farms are abandoned, the family moves on, and the cycle of destruction is repeated anew. The remaining 30% of tropical forest destruction in Central and South America is attributable to lumbering and cattle ranching.

To be continued.....

Next issue Part II



"MAYFLOWER" (*EPIGAEA REPENS*)

return address: Halifax Field Naturalists
c/o N.S. Museum
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6.