

HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS' NEWSLETTER

September '89 to November '89

No. 56



Return address:
Halifax Field Naturalists
c/o Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street
Halifax, NS B3H 3A6



FIELD • NATURALISTS

er appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history, both of HFN and in the public at large. To represent the interests of naturalists conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources.

Meetings On the 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 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 NS Museum. Memberships received from September 1, 1989 and after, will be valid from September 1, 1989 to December 31, 1990. Members receive the HFN Newsletter and notices of all meetings, field trips, and special programs. The fees are as follows:

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

Executive 1989

President	Michael Downing	823-2081
Treasurer	Bernice Moores	422-5292
Secretary	Jim Ross	866-3029
Past President	John van der Meer	

Directors Doug Linzey, Sifford Pearre, Stephanie Robertson, Eleanor Simonyi, Clarence Stevens, Colin Stewart, Shirley van Nostrand

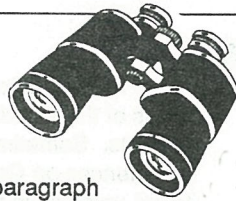
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1747 Summer Street, Halifax,
Nova Scotia B3H 3A6

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		(trips)	
		Deannie Fraser	466-6891
		(talks)	
	Bird Atlas Coordinator HFN	Clarence Stevens	835-0098
	Publicit	Doug Linzey	445-4943
	Public Service Announcement ...	Doug Linzey	445-4943

The HFN Newsletter is produced courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum. It is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and is a member organisation of the Canadian Nature Federation. HFN is registered for federal income tax purposes. Official receipts will be issued for individual and corporate gifts.

HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HFN RECEIVES CHARITABLE STATUS



HFN is now a registered charity under paragraph 149 (1) (f) of the income tax act. The following excerpts from recent correspondence are supplied for the information of members.

Gifts made to HFN may be claimed by both individuals and corporate donors. In the case of individuals, the amount of the gift should be applied as a credit, while corporate donors will deduct the amount given.

A gift may be defined as a voluntary and gratuitous transfer of real or personal property, for which there must be a donor who freely disposes of his/her property and a donee who receives the property given. No right, privilege, material benefit, or advantage may accrue to the donor or to a person designated by him/her.

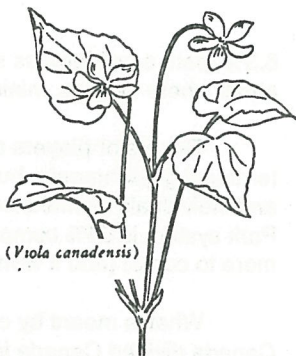
Official receipts will be issued for all payments which qualify. They will not be issued for payment of dues.

— Bernice Moores
Treasurer



NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

Jeanette Babin
Phyllis Bryson
Geraldine Dunnigan
Sydney Franklin
Agnes James
Janice Kidson
Gordon MacWilliam
R. MacLeod Rogers
Sean Smith
Ron L. Thompson



Canada Violet (*Viola canadensis*)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The first question HFN directors ask when any new initiative is proposed is usually, "Who is going to do the work?"; projects commonly die on the floor, regardless of their potential, when there is no satisfactory answer. At any time most directors are either involved in a standing committee or active on one or two ongoing projects. New undertakings generally require help from outside the board. Getting this help is sometimes enough to stop a good idea from becoming a motion. One may spend a couple of evenings on the blower working up a list of volunteers, and even at a meeting there may be no one who can make a commitment at short notice. The result is that a fair amount

of lead time is needed for HFN to get going on something new. This does not necessarily imply an inactive membership; we probably need a more efficient way to get potential volunteers and projects together.

HFN, along with many other organisations, experiments from time to time with "Fill-in-the-Blanks" volunteer questionnaires on its membership form. They don't work well; most people ignore them, and those who don't get tired of waiting for someone to call them back. But it is easy to do and provides the club with a list of people who have certain skills, so we keep doing it.

In an effort to address this organisational difficulty, the directors have asked me to write a note for the newsletter describing the sort of work people other than the directors are doing in the HFN. We hope, thereby, that some potentially active members will see fulfilling opportunities for themselves.

Actually, there is not much difference between what directors and other active members of the HFN do, except that only directors vote at board meetings. Most of the work of the HFN is done in independent committees, each of which typically has a director on it; the director reports on activities to the board, but is not necessarily the committee's chair.

At present we have four standing committees:

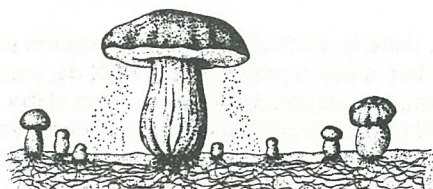
Newsletter Committee — The newsletter committee was recently reorganised, and took on some new members; it contains six people, one of whom is a director. They need writers, especially on natural history topics. The contact person is Stephanie Robertson (422-6366).

Programme Committee — About half the work of the program committee is done by non-directors. This committee arranges our schedule of lectures and field trips for the quarterly program that is included with the newsletter. It also received new members recently when Milton and Norma Gregg retired after several seasons of outstanding service. There are enough members on this committee now to manage the work, but past experience shows that we should try to get one or two more people involved, to ensure continuity for this most important committee. Inquiries about the program committee can be directed to Eleanor or Omar Simonyi (477-1149).

Publicity & Membership — Doug Linzey (445-4943) is revitalising our publicity and membership committee. Seeking for ways of increasing our membership and improving our publications and press coverage, this committee needs a wide range of volunteer skills. We hope this committee will become the centre for people involved in a wide variety of tasks — calling media contacts, designing promotional material, distributing HFN brochures and membership forms, and manning an HFN table at public events, for example. In particular, we are considering the

creation of a display which could be set up at such events as fairs and trade shows. We could have participated in two such events recently, an outdoorsman show in Lawrencetown and the "Atlantic Earth Festival" near Lunenburg, but were unable to organise a creditable display quickly enough.

Conservation Issues Committee — Our newest standing committee is the Conservation Issues committee. Its job is to identify areas of environmental concern and bring them to the attention of the directors. Subject to the approval of the board, it writes position papers, and letters to politicians, etc., on behalf of the club. Its work involves research, writing, and speaking. It takes a lot of background work to participate convincingly in public discussion; foreground work is also needed if the HFN is to be an effective public advocate, while constantly maintaining a safe margin of separation between foot and mouth. Interested parties should call Colin Stewart (466-7168). Call Colin too if you find an issue that needs the club's attention — especially if you can provide some of that attention yourself.



Schematic drawing illustrating spore dispersal, the development of the mycelium and the propagation of the fungi.



Non-directors are also active outside the mandate areas of the standing committees, particularly in special projects. Sometimes physical labour is involved — erecting snowfences on Conrad's Beach, for example — or helping to set up signs in the Public Gardens. Sometimes involvement is a short, one-shot proposition — such as helping with registration at the Trails Conference. On the other hand, some people have been involved continuously with various field studies over a period of years. At present, the club is also contributing to research in the field of natural history by working two squares for the *Breeding Bird Atlas*.

Altogether, a wide variety of activity which should appeal to a wide variety of temperaments is becoming available as HFN grows. We need foreground and background people. We need speakers, writers, artists, and researchers. We need people to debate what is to be done, and people who prefer to do, leaving the arguing to others. We need people who prefer physical activity and people who are nature observers. We need people to make the tea and type the letters. Whatever your area of interest, whatever your talent (or what you may consider lack of talent), please consider becoming more active in HFN.

— Michael Downing,
President



Different types of spores.

SPECIAL REPORTS

ENDANGERED SPACES

Yes, that's right, spaces, not species. It was a new one on me too, but intuitively apt nonetheless.

We recently received a request from the World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF) to join it and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) in a 10-year program to complete the establishment of protected areas in each of the natural regions of Canada.

But let me back up a few years.

In 1987 Madame Gro Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, chaired a UN-sponsored group called the World Commission on Environment and Development (commonly called the Brundtland Commission). Their report, called *Our Common Future*, is available as a paperback. It has had major worldwide impact, resulting in "Conservation Strategies" and "Round Tables on Environment and Economy". These latter subjects will be the topic of a future article.

One of the recommendations contained in this report is that 12% of the world's lands be preserved in a wilderness state. Currently, Canada has protected either

6.3% (park or wilderness status), or 2.3%, if you exclude areas where logging, mining, or hunting are permitted.

The major players are the federal, provincial and territorial governments, but local governments, corporations and individuals all make contributions. Canada's National Park system is 54% complete. Conversely, there is 46% more to come! (and it won't come easily).

What is meant by complete? In the '70s Parks Canada divided Canada into natural regions. These are large-scale recognisable biological units such as short-grass prairies, alpine tundra, and boreal forest. The Canadian Parks Service (formerly Parks Canada) has defined 39 terrestrial and 9 marine regions. It has set itself the goal of protecting representative samples of each by having at least one national park in each region.

As mentioned above, that 6.3% already protected includes provincial initiatives such as Provincial Parks and Ecological Reserves (e.g., Special Places in Nova Scotia). Most provinces (including N.S.) also have a plan describing a target "complete system". These targets are often more pragmatic, like "one campground in every county". Regardless of the definition, the attitudes and efforts toward completion of these systems vary.

So, we have a concept of complete parks and wilderness systems for the federal government and most provinces. We have a target proportion of the land base (12%), and we have a reasonable biological base to ensure that we protect some of everything (the Canadian Parks Service's natural regions). What's missing? The drive to do it?

What this "Endangered Spaces" initiative comes down to is: the people (who say they support parks and wilderness every time they're asked) must encourage the politicians (who happily approve documents like park system development plans) to get on with the task of completing what they have already initiated before wildernesses to preserve no longer exist. The target completion date is the year 2000.



The Endangered Spaces program will be kicked off in September with the publication of a 300-page hardcover book entitled *Endangered Spaces: The Future of Canada's Wilderness*. This book is suitable for coffee tables but is intended to be informative, accurate, and inspirational.

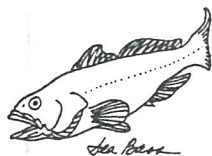
WWF and CPAWS have also come up with a Canadian Wilderness Charter which they are asking groups like the Halifax Field Naturalists to endorse, and which individuals will also be able to sign after the official launch in September. It follows this article.



The following quote is an observation made 40 years ago by an American naturalist.

In Canada a representative series of wildernesses can and should be kept. It will be contended, of course, that no deliberate planning to this end is necessary; that adequate areas will survive anyhow. But all recent history belies so comforting an assumption. To what extent Canadians will be able to see and grasp their opportunities is anybody's guess.

— Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949



—Colin Stewart
Conservation Issues Committee



CANADIAN WILDERNESS CHARTER



1. Whereas humankind is but one of millions of species sharing planet Earth and whereas the future of the Earth is severely threatened by the activities of this single species,

2. Whereas our planet has already lost much of its former wilderness character, thereby endangering many species and ecosystems,

3. Whereas Canadians still have the opportunity to complete a network of protected areas representing the biological diversity of our country,

4. Whereas Canada's remaining wild places, be they land or water, merit protection for their inherent value,

5. Whereas the protection of wilderness also meets an intrinsic human need for spiritual rekindling and artistic inspiration,

6. Whereas Canada's once vast wilderness has deeply shaped the national identity and continues to profoundly influence how we view ourselves as Canadians,

7. Whereas Canada's aboriginal peoples hold deep and direct ties to wilderness areas throughout Canada and seek to maintain options for traditional wilderness use,

8. Whereas protected areas can serve a variety of purposes including:

- a) preserving a genetic reservoir of wild plants and animals for future use and appreciation by citizens of Canada and the world,
- b) producing economic benefits from environmentally sensitive tourism,
- c) offering opportunities for research and environmental education,



9. Whereas the opportunity to complete a national network of protected areas must be grasped and acted upon during the next ten years, or be lost,

We the undersigned agree and urge:

1. That governments, industries, environmental groups and individual Canadians commit themselves to a national effort to establish at least one representative protected area in each of the natural regions of Canada by the year 2000,

2. That the total area thereby protected comprise at least 12% of the lands and waters of Canada as recommended in the World Commission on Environment and Development's report *Our Common Future*,

3. That public and private agencies at international, national, provincial, territorial and local levels rigorously monitor progress toward meeting these goals in Canada and ensure that they are fully achieved, and

4. That federal, provincial and territorial government conservation agencies on behalf of all Canadians develop action plans by 1990 for achieving these goals by the year 2000.

— Signed by the Authors of *Endangered Spaces*

HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
(Unaudited)

For the year ended December 31, 1988

	1988	1987
Receipts		
Membership dues	\$ 1,772.00	\$ 1,591.00
Interest income	102.87	107.69
Other income (Note 1)	173.89	559.69
	<u>2,048.76</u>	<u>2,258.38</u>
Disbursements		
Meeting and program expenses	241.27	128.07
Publications and stationery	425.06	124.75
Postage	522.00	580.15
Bank charges	87.50	66.55
Dues - Canadian Nature Federation	30.00	30.00
Donation - Canadian Nature Federation	20.00	20.00
Dues - Recreational Association of Nova Scotia	45.00	40.00
Insurance	115.00	210.00
Projects - Science Fair	62.00	54.00
Project - Piping Plover	-	17.12
Project - Conrad Beach Area Study	3.45	-
Trails conference	-	40.00
Life membership - Doris Butters	-	54.64
Workshop - How to Promote Your Organization	-	96.00
Logo	19.95	74.64
Application for charitable status	5.50	-
	<u>1,576.73</u>	<u>1,535.92</u>
Excess of receipts over disbursements	472.03	722.46
Surplus account balance at beginning of year	3,284.97	2,562.51
Adjustment of net revenue on field project (Note 2)	(369.49)	-
Surplus account balance at end of year	<u>\$ 3,387.51</u>	<u>\$ 3,284.97</u>
Consisting of:		
Petty cash	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Current account	391.65	747.58
Savings account	2,815.26	2,512.39
Lapel pins on hand, at cost	155.60	-
	<u>\$ 3,387.51</u>	<u>\$ 3,284.97</u>

ACCOUNTANT'S COMMENTS

I have prepared without audit, the above Statement of Receipts and Disbursements of Halifax Field Naturalists, for the year ended December 31, 1988 from the records of the Society and other information supplied to me by the Treasurer.

Halifax, N.S.
February 15, 1989

E. K. Ballantyne
Chartered Accountant

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
(Unaudited)

For the year ended December 31, 1988

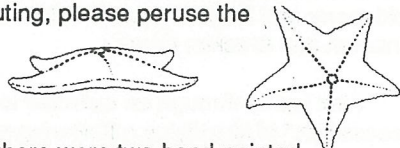
	1988	1987
1. OTHER INCOME		
Aileen Meagher hasty notes	\$ 118.39	
Lapel pins	55.50	
Halifax Public Gardens project (see Note 2)		\$ 559.69
	<u>\$ 173.89</u>	<u>\$ 559.69</u>
2. NET REVENUE ON HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS PROJECT		
Amount recorded for the year 1987		\$ 559.69
Excess of expenditures over revenue during 1988		369.49
		<u>\$ 190.20</u>

FIELD TRIPS



DALHOUSIE BIOLOGY LAB TOUR

(Unfortunately, the last part of Norma Gregg's article on the March 4, 1989 Dalhousie Lab Tour was inadvertently left unfinished in the last HFN Newsletter. For those of you who were waiting to hear about the fate of the Labrador duck specimen and its plastic replicas, and of the other happenings during this outing, please peruse the following...)



.... In one glass case there were two hand-painted plastic replicas of the now extinct Labrador duck (*Camptorhynchus labradorius*). In 1871 the last living specimen in Canada had been shot at Grand Manan, although previously these ducks were reasonably common in Pictou and Halifax harbours. Until 1971 Dalhousie Biology lab had had one of the few remaining preserved specimens, but it was decided the National Museum of Science in Ottawa could provide a safer location for it. The plastic ones were sent to Dalhousie University in exchange. The Thomas McCulloch Museum is open to the public Monday — Friday until 4:30 pm.

Just outside the biology lab are three display tanks used for teaching purposes. These are large shallow tanks, one of them having a muddy, sandy bottom for animals who like that environment. There we saw sea urchins, sea cucumbers, sea potatoes, sea peaches, sea anemones, fan worms, and starfish, etc. All these small animals and all other marine plants or animals needed by the lab are brought in by the full-time diver the Department employs.

At last it was time to take the elevator up to the huge glass greenhouse, which covers the roof of the Biology Department, and which we had seen as we approached the building. The commanding panoramic view as we got off the elevator had us all gasping with delight — this view must literally be seen to be believed.

On the door of the greenhouse is a notice saying that there are approximately 65 different plant families represented in the greenhouse. The majority of these are from such areas as Central and South America, Africa, Malaysia, Japan, China, New Zealand, Australia, Tahiti, and southern Europe. The greenhouse is used to provide teaching materials for the students' laboratories and for research. Inside the greenhouse, once one could tear one's eyes away from the view, were various rooms such as the Hot Semi-tropical room, Orchid room, Cactus room and Fern room. So many interesting and exotic plants and blossoms were in all the rooms. The Fern room had several large plastic tents with different temperatures and humidities in each. All too soon it was time to take the elevator back down to reality and to thank Chris for a most informative and enjoyable two hours. We all appreciated the time he took to give us this guided tour around the building.

— Norma Gregg



BLOMIDON PROVINCIAL PARK

DATE: Saturday, May 20, 1989

PLACE: Blomidon Provincial Park

WEATHER: Sunny, but cool and blustery

PARTICIPANTS: 20 + , with one infant, Peter Simonyi

LEADER: Susan Hawkins

We arrived at Blomidon Park in mid-morning and started along the Joudrey Trail, walking initially along the top of the bluff at the side of the camping area. We saw plenty of Wild Lily of the Valley, Wild Strawberries and Violets and the odd Trillium. We continued along the fence, enjoying the views over the Minas Basin, and finally entered the woods at the far end of the park, rejoining the trail a little further on. There were many Red Trillium scattered through the woods, and large banks of Clintonia, not yet in bloom. Other plants identified along the trail included Twisted-Stalk, False Solomon's Seal and Dutchman's Breeches.

At about noon we arrived at the pool in which Fairy Shrimp were found for the first time in Nova Scotia last year. After a little fishing around with a net we were happy to find them there once again, swimming on their backs, regularly spaced a few inches above the pond floor. We decided that this would make a good lunch stop and got the group gathered. While we sat, the children took the net and collected and displayed the animals in the pond and surrounding area; these included a Toad, tadpoles, Caddis Fly larvae (which caught and ate Fairy Shrimp in the confines of the plastic bag), various water beetles and many many Fairy Shrimp. All the captives were returned to the pond before we moved on after lunch.

Since we still had about three-quarters of the trail left to cover we picked up the pace a bit after lunch and the group got somewhat broken up. We continued to see most of the same plants along the trail, though to our disappointment few were in bloom. Some members of the party reported seeing Wild Leeks. Another plant, growing at the base of a tree, which puzzled us for some time was finally identified by Regina Maass as White Baneberry.

We gathered together again when we reached Indian Springs Brook, at the site of the cairn commemorating the gift of a large proportion of the park land by Roy Joudrey. We decided at this point that the group members would finish the trail at their own pace and meet back at the cars. Some of us proceeded to the final look-off for a last view out over the Minas Basin before starting back along the Woodland Trail. On the way back many of the members spent some time watching the slumber of a porcupine on a tree limb. Mary Primrose stopped for a bit of porcupine photography.

All in all it was a lovely ramble through the woods with lots of spring flowers and wonderful views over the Minas Basin; thanks to Susan Hawkins for sharing one of her favourite places with us.

— Susan Thomas

POLLY COVE & PEGGY'S COVE

DATE: Saturday, July 22, 1989

PLACE: Polly Cove and Peggy's Cove

WEATHER: Sunny, 25 C

PARTICIPANTS: 19

NATURE INTERPRETER: Alex Wilson, Nova Scotia Museum

A group of enthusiastic naturalists met with Alex Wilson to learn about coastal botany surrounding two trails in the Peggy's Cove area.

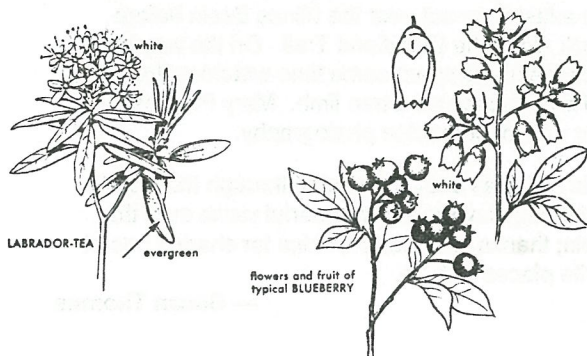
Our first stop was Polly Cove, located to the east of Peggy's Cove. Alex remarked that the rocky landscape is much as it was 10,000 years ago when the glaciers were retreating. The vegetation of the barrens, influenced by a wet summer, was lush and verdant, a mosaic of subtle greens on the day of our visit.

Alex explained that this section of the Nova Scotia coastline has been declared a nondevelopment area and is part of the Atlantic Coastal Theme Region. The underlying substrate is granite rock, but the area is really defined by the climate with its mild winters, plentiful fog, low sunlight, late springs and late autumns. The area does not contain many introduced plant species as the climate is inhospitable to them.

Along the trail, we identified trees and plants of the barrens: Jack Pine, Larch, Foxberry, Crowberry, Raspberry, Blackberry, Labrador Tea, Canada Holly, Lion's-Paw, Bunchberry, and various lichens. Alex drew our attention to a carpet of Bearberry which had originally taken root on the thin soil next to a flat granite boulder. Since nothing else was using the rock, other than a variety of lichens, the Bearberry had formed a compact mat of vegetation over the granite. In the mesh of branches, organic material was being trapped and Wintergreen had begun to grow. Alex remarked that the Bearberry's advance across the granite is rather like the glacier's former advance across the same boulders.

We paused before some Alders bordering the trail. Alex commented that although alders are a weedy species and much despised, these shrubs are nitrogen fixers and other plants will be able to grow here later.

At a point overlooking Polly Cove, we gazed at the slope above as Alex made concluding comments about the coastal barrens' vegetation. Basically the tree cover is poor,



interspersed with dead coniferous trees that have been torn from the poor soils by onshore winds. Within the heath-fern plant association, the commonly found heath plants are Huckleberry and Bayberry and the dominant ferns are Cinnamon and Bracken Ferns.

Alex led us through an exercise to determine the "success rate" of identifying a flowering plant of the barrens by using well-known field guides and *The Flora of Nova Scotia*. Peterson's and Newcomb's fairly quickly identified a chosen flowering plant (*Potentilla tridentata*, the Three-Tooth Cinquefoil), but there was considerable difficulty with *The Flora of Nova Scotia*; a major revision of this book is underway to correct these deficiencies.

We were also treated to a demonstration of the correct materials and techniques needed to press plants for a herbarium. Alex chose a Round-Leaved Sundew and a piece of Alder to show us the various methods to successfully press each sample.

We then moved closer to Peggy's Cove, to another trail which displays the variety of habitats of this coastal area — the pocket bog, the coastal barren, and the marine environment.

The pocket bogs, wonderful habitats that have formed wherever water collects among the granite boulders, intrigued us with such insectivorous plants as Spatulate-Leaved Sundew, Bladderwort, and Pitcher Plant. The soils here are mineral-poor, thus the plants derive nutrition from the insects they capture.

The bogs in which these plants are found were originally ponds. Sphagnum Moss grew around the edges and eventually filled the ponds. The lower portions of the Sphagnum rot as the upper layer continues to grow. At Alex's suggestion, we pushed our fingers just a few inches into the moss and discovered that it is a fine insulator - Sphagnum bogs are cold places!

As we wandered over the coastal barren, Alex introduced us to a number of plants from varying habitats; these included Creeping and Common Junipers, Seaside Plantain, Seaside Goldenrod, Silverweed, Calopogon and Bakeapple.

The coastal marine zonation is well developed in the Peggy's Cove region; Alex mentioned it has been extensively studied and descriptions may be read by all in a 1950's study by T. and A. Stephenson.

Alex, thank you for sharing your expertise with us and for giving us more insight concerning the botany of another beautiful area of our province.

— Betty Learmouth

MCNAB'S ISLAND

DATE: Saturday July 29th

PLACE: McNab's Island

WEATHER: Sunny

PARTICIPANTS: 14

NATURE INTERPRETER: Colin Stewart



Saturday turned out to be a beautiful day for a hike to McNab's Island. We left the Cable Wharf in Halifax shortly after 10 am and arrived at Garrison Pier on McNab's Island about 20 minutes later. Our first destination on the island was Hangman's Beach and Lighthouse. Along the way we noticed lots of flowering plants adapted to life on the gravel spit. Some of the more notable plants included Jewelweed, Wrinkle Rose, Hop-Clover, Rabbit-foot Clover, Hedge Bindweed, Wild Radish, Evening Primrose, Beach Pea, Sea Beach Dock, Groundsel, Hyssop, Skull Cap, Field Sow-Thistle, Arrow-Leaved Tear-Thumb and St. John's-Wort. We also noted several species of birds including Osprey, Cedar Waxwing and Goldfinch.

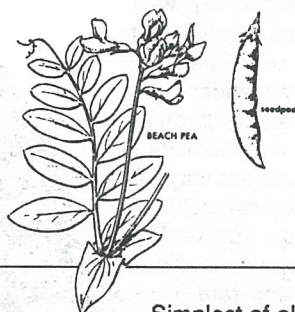
On our arrival at the lighthouse Colin gave a short talk on the history of the island, its significance in the protection

of Halifax and its future potential as parkland.

Our next stop was Fort McNab, where we had lunch on top of the fort overlooking the mouth of the harbour, a beautiful view. Berry-picking along the way was great; raspberries and blueberries were both ripe with blackberries soon to follow.

After lunch we took the main road down to Wreck Cove, where we had a good view of Lawlor's Island and an Osprey nest. Some of the plants we noted in this area were Swamp Candles, Knotweed, Bracken Fern, Eyebright, Sheep-Sorrel, Coltsfoot, Hemp-Nettle, Smartweed, Ragged Fringed Orchid and Knapweed. We walked along the beach and circled back to the main road, arriving back at Garrison Pier about half an hour before the ferry was to arrive. Taking advantage of the half-hour wait we checked out the Island Tea Room and although it wasn't very fancy, the ice cream was great!

A great time was had by all; however, we only covered a small area of the island, which certainly warrants another visit in the future. Thank you, Colin.



— Darlene Burton.

SPECIAL ARTICLE

FEEDING WINTER BIRDS — THIS EARLY?

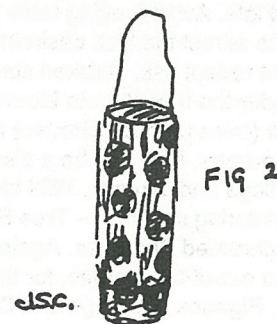
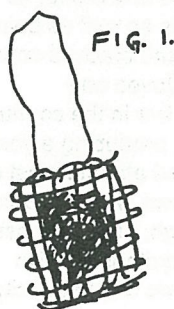


It may seem odd to be thinking about winter bird-feeding in midsummer, but to establish an interesting feeding station for next winter, one should begin in September. The time is now!

Feeding should begin in mid-September, when there are still lots of birds around. This is particularly important if a NEW feeding station is to be established. Many of the first birds to come will eat and then depart for the south, but WORD WILL HAVE GOT AROUND (really, it's true), that "here is a feeder", and you will have, with luck, a faithful few that will remain. Nothing attracts birds like other birds and this small clientele will bring in the winter species when they arrive.

I'm primarily concerned in this article with home-made feeders. Most inexpensive to make, and not too difficult — the birds like these just as much as the most exotic, roofed, swinging, turning, and hanging types one can buy.

Simplest of all is a lump of suet hung from a tree in the yard. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches and Black-capped Chickadees all love suet. So do crows and starlings, who can decimate a "nice fat piece" of suet in a couple of days. To prevent this, or if your suet is in small pieces (large lumps are sometimes hard to find), make a bag from hardware cloth (Fig. 1). Take a piece about 8 x 16 inches and place the suet on one side. Fold over the other side and turn in the ends with pliers. Add a bit of wire and hang it up. A Fat Log is most successful (Fig. 2). Take an ordinary fire-place log and drill holes 3/4 — 1 inch deep. Render down some suet, mix it half and half with mixed bird seed, fill the holes with the mixture and hang it up. If you are feeling particularly affluent, you can use peanut butter instead. Birds that like suet LOVE peanut butter - it's the catnip of the bird world. However, do mix it with bird seed first - the thick cloggy texture of ice-cold peanut butter can cause birds to choke.



Some birds are fruit eaters, even when the fruit is frozen. Maybe you already have Multi-flora Roses, Barberry, Mountain Ash, etc. in the garden. If you don't, you can plant some for the future and in the meantime — try grapes. These need not be in superb condition. The half-gone kind obtained free or nearly so at the grocers are just fine (Fig. 3). Suspend two or three on a longish string from tree or clothes-line and hope for Mockingbirds and Orioles. While these are not common, they are regular in early winter and love grapes (the small bunches and long strings are to discourage starlings, which can sit on large bunches and finish them in no time).

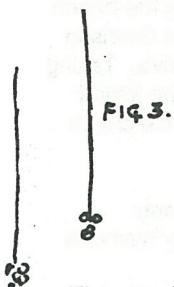


FIG. 3.

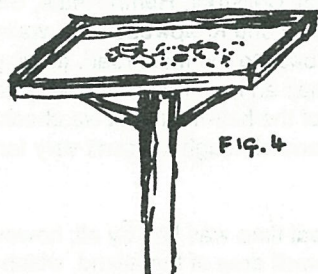


FIG. 4.

The standing feeder need only be a wooden tray, with edges to prevent seed from falling off, on top of a sturdy post (Fig. 4). I have one tray just outside a window with a tree branch for perching attached to it (Fig. 5). A tray feeder should be out in the open so that cats cannot sneak up on it but close enough to some trees or hedges so that the birds can dive for cover from marauding hawks. There are ways to "educate" neighbourhood cats at no harm to the cat, but I don't intend to go into that here. I enjoy having a Lobster Pot Feeder (Fig. 6). For some reason, small birds enjoy feeding from inside the pot. Perhaps they feel secure and safe. They can hop in and out at will and no cats or hawks can get at them. Apart from anything else it's a great conversation piece!

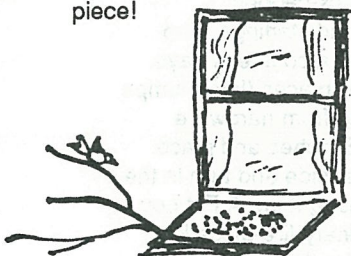


FIG. 5.

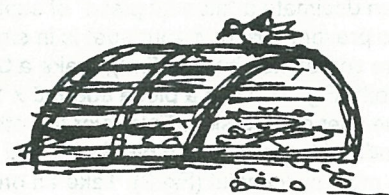


FIG. 6.

Once the feeder is in place, one must decide what feed to use. The main choices are chicken scratch, cracked corn, mixed wild bird seed, and the gourmet stuff — sunflower seed. By the way, it is much cheaper, less than half as much, to buy bird seed from seed companies in fifty-pound bags, than from the grocery stores in tiny three- to five-pound lots. Avoid feeding table scraps and bread, as they tend to attract the less desirable birds as well as being an incipient rodent risk. Chicken scratch and cracked corn on and under the tray attracts Mourning Doves and Pheasants (even perhaps Grouse) if you live in the country. In town, however, they can be a disaster, producing a yard full of starlings and pigeons. Wild bird seed attracts most of our overwintering species — Tree Sparrows, Juncos, Song and Whitethroated Sparrows. Again though, such success is confined to out-of-town areas, for the ubiquitous English Sparrows, Pigeons, Starlings and Cowbirds will, in the city,

take over the garden, crowding out the other birds.

Sunflower seeds are the in-town answer — unfortunately they are not cheap. They will attract Blue Jays, Chickadees, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Goldfinches, Redpolls, Purple Finches and so on. The bills of the "nuisance birds" are not suitable for opening sunflower seeds and so they can only feed on dropped bits here and there. Thus, the numbers are controlled.

I live in town and feed only sunflower seed on my tray feeders. I use mixed seed to mix with the suet in the hanging feeders and in VERY frigid weather put small amounts well underneath a few branches for any overwintering Song Sparrows or White-throats I might have.

Once having got going, you can branch out. Droll Yankee Feeders are not too expensive and are fun (Fig. 7). They consist of a clear plastic tube with holes and perches at which several birds may feed at once.

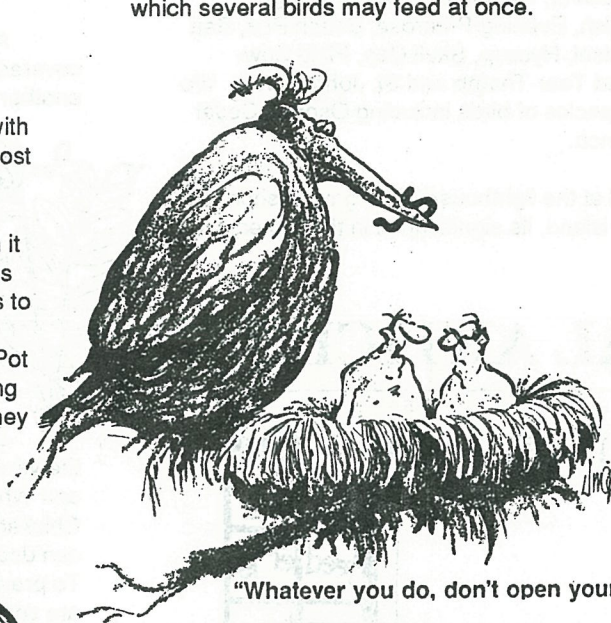


FIG. 7.

"Whatever you do, don't open your mouth."

The assortment of "boughten" feeders is tremendous: thistle seed feeders for finches, humming bird feeders (summer and fall only), window feeders, wire baskets for suet, enormous condominium feeders at over \$100 a go, etc. There is even an electrical gadget for melting water in a bird bath. None is really necessary — in mid-winter the home-mades are just as adequate and usually better looking.

To conclude, I'd like to say two more things. One is that it is possible to construct a bird feeder from an old milk carton. Possibly the birds don't mind them, but I find them so aesthetically abhorrent, like bits of dangling garbage, that I have included no plan for them here. The second is much more important. If you do start feeding, and establish a band of "regulars", please don't stop providing until late March. Some of the birds coming might well have gone elsewhere had they not found you. In the cold winter months, they may be relying on a continued supply of food and may perish should it suddenly stop. Once feeding is undertaken, there is a responsibility involved, albeit one that can be a joy to fulfil.

— J. Shirley Cohrs
Adapted from the *NS Bird Society Bulletin*, 1987

TABLE DES MARÉES

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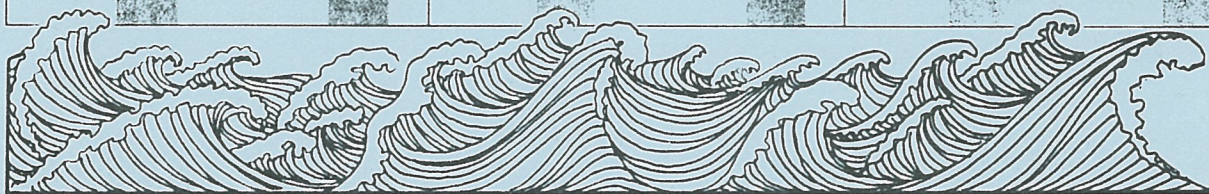
1989

OCTOBER-OCTOBRE

NOVEMBER-NOVEMBRE

DECEMBER-DECEMBRE

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		WE ME		11 0445 1050 1645 2315	5.3 1.9 5.4 3.9	1.6 1.6 1.6 3			26 TH JE		0550 1225 1810 2345	5.7 1.4 5.4 5.4	1.7 1.4 1.6 1.6		11 SA SA			0545 1225 1815 2345	6.5 1.8 5.9 6.1	2.0 1.2 1.8 1.9		26 SU DI			0030 0615 1305 1900	2.0 5.9 1.0 5.3	.6 1.8 3 1.6	11 MO LU				0020 0610 1310 1855	1.4 6.6 4 5.8	.4 2 1 1.8	26 TU MA
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ELECAMPAE



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ARTICHOKE

NATURE NOTES

Sun., Aug. 27 — A Northern Mockingbird in Point Pleasant Park unsuccessfully attempting to dig for a grub...

— **Grace Burke, Frances Fuller**

August 1989 — A regular Northern Mockingbird in Flynn Park...

— **Ursula and Sue Grigg**

July 1989 — A mother Hummingbird trying to teach her young offspring to nectar-feed. He/she was more interested in the seed pods. Ah, the vagaries of youth!

— **Lesley Butters**

! NEXT DEADLINE !
October 15 for November Issue

Contributions to the Editor, HFN
c/o NS Museum or phone 455-8126