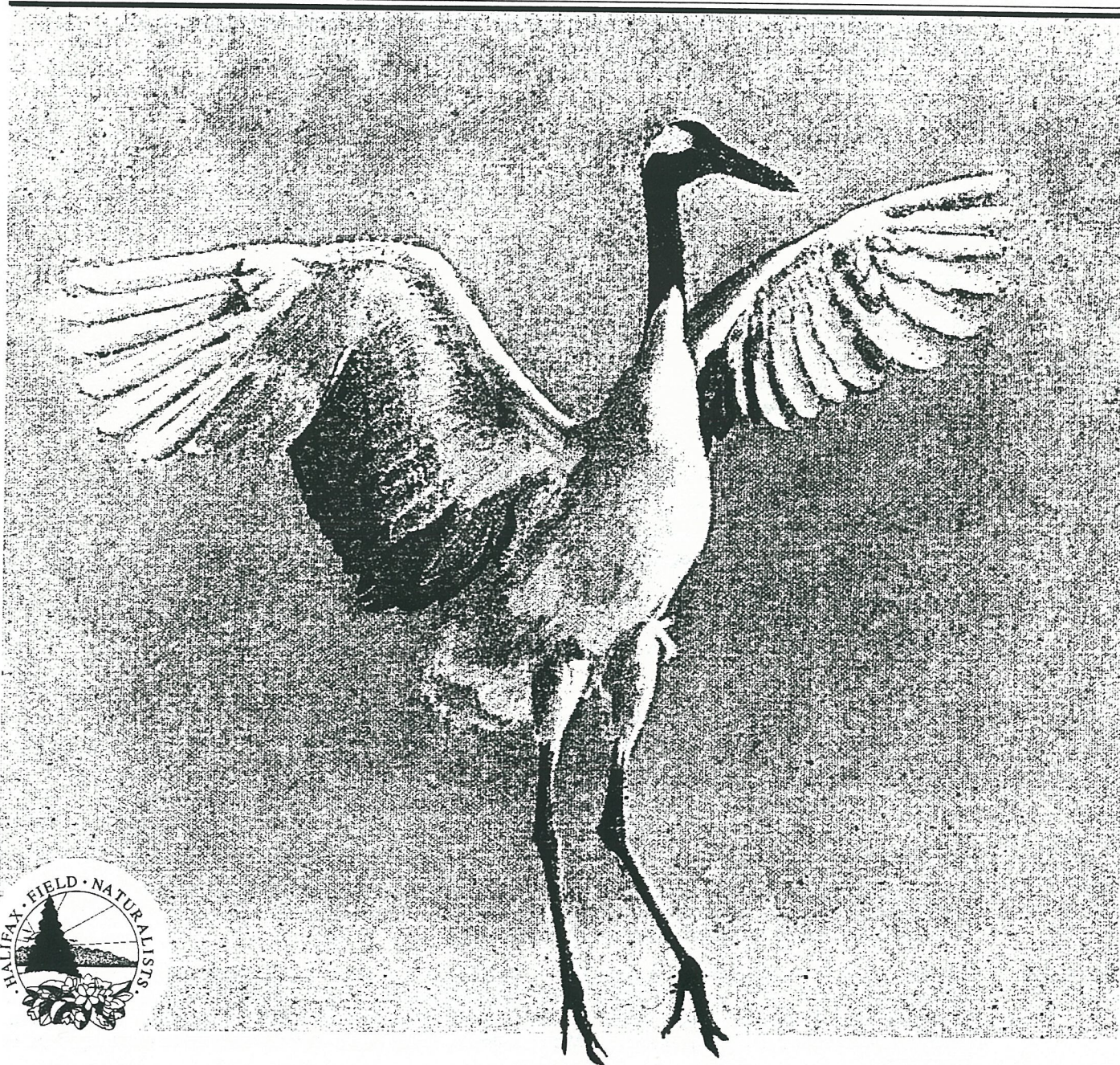


HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS' NEWSLETTER

June to August 1996

No. 83



Return address: HFN, c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, NS, B3H 3A6

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** On the first Thursday of every month at 8:00 pm in the auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax. Meetings are open to the public.
- 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.** Everyone, member or not, is welcome to take part in field trips.
- 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 Secretary, Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o NS Museum of Natural History. New memberships starting from September 1 will be valid until the end of the following membership year. The regular membership year is from January 1 to December 31. Members receive the HFN Newsletter and notices of all meetings, field trips, and special programmes. The fees are as follows:
- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Individual | \$12.00 per year |
| Family | \$18.00 per year |
| Supporting | \$20.00 per year |
| FNSN (opt.) | \$5.00 per year |
- Executive 1995**
- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| President | Stephanie Robertson | 422-6326 |
| Vice-President | Peter Payzant | 861-1607 |
| Treasurer | Greg Crosby | 422-4650 |
| Secretary | Linda Payzant | 861-1607 |
| Past President | Colin Stewart | 466-7168 |
- Directors** Deborah Burleson, Patricia Chalmers, Ursula Grigg, Doug Linzey, Bernice Moores, Rich Peckham
- Mailing Address** Halifax Field Naturalists
c/o Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer St., Halifax
Nova Scotia B3H 3A6
- Internet** <http://ccn.cs.dal.ca/Recreation/FieldNaturalists/fieldnat.html>
- Committees**
- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Programme | Cathy Fulton | 835-8289 |
| | Jennifer MacKeigan | 883-9766 |
| | Regina Maass | |
| Refreshments | Regina Maass | |
| Membership | Shirley van Nostrand | 835-3673 |
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| Editor | Ursula Grigg | 455-8160 |
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| | Shirley van Nostrand | 835-3673 |
| Conservation | Colin Stewart | 466-7168 |
- HFN** is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act. It is a member organisation of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists and of the Canadian Nature Federation. It is registered for federal income tax purposes. Official receipts will be issued for individual and corporate gifts.
- Illustrations** (All illustrations not acknowledged are either by H. Derbyshire or are from copyright-free sources)
This Issue (No. 83): p. 7 - Carolina Spring Beauty (*Claytonia caroliniana*), - Lee Allen Peterson's **Field Guide To Edible Wild Plants**, Houghton Mifflin Co, 1977. White Violet (*Viola pallens*), - collection Doris Butters. Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullata*) - Michael Almon, 1986; p. 11 - Halifax Tide Table courtesy Dept. of Transport.

HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL

Our various spring initiatives seem to be bearing fruit.

Bird Census The bird work by Peter and Linda Payzant is finished; the plant survey still needs to be done; and some of the marking lines need to be cleared. If you would like to help, contact Peter Payzant at 861-1607(h), 428-7721(w), or peter.payzant@nspower.ns.ca or aa095@ccn.cs.dal.ca

The Payzants will be presenting a paper on this work at the Society of Canadian Ornithologists Annual meeting at UNB, Fredericton, on August 24.

Butterfly Census This first Nova Scotia Butterfly Count will take place on 13 July (rain date 14 July). There has already been one training field trip (see page 8) and there will be another on July 6 (rain date July 7). Contact coordinator Peter Payzant (see 'Bird Census' above) if you want to take part.

Ladybugs There is still time to send for your copy of the Ladybug Identification Kit. You will be able to tell which are which when they appear in your garden! Call 613-562-3447, fax 613-562-3447, e-mail epccnf@web.apc.org, or write Scott Plunket at CNF, 1 Nicholas St., Ottawa, Ont., K1N 7B7.

Frog Watch Frogwatch is over for the year and possibly for good. Results are posted in the MNH. The coordinators are considering what other watch could be substituted in future years.

Parking HFN Field Trip participants' meeting place transfer from the MNH's Visitor's parking lot to its Staff parking lot seems to be working well. People are remembering to go the right place! Thank you, everyone.



HFN SALE ITEMS

Support your club and its activities by purchasing the following items as gifts, or for yourself. Because we are a non-profit organisation, **YOU SAVE BY PAYING NO GST OR PST!** We have the following available:

HFN LOGO PINS \$5.00, save \$1.93!
(very attractive & colourful)

HFN HASTI-NOTES \$5.00, save \$1.93!
(tastefully done, useful gift; in memory of Aileen Meagher)

PIPING PLOVER

SWEATSHIRTS \$25.00, save \$4.69!
(excellent quality material, XL, L, & M; grey, or white)

ENDANGERED SPACES

T-SHIRTS \$15.00, save \$2.81!
(help preserve our valuable ecological habitats)

OPLER BUTTERFLY

FIELD GUIDE \$23.00, (members) save \$4.32!
(new, up-to-date!) \$25.50; (non-mbrs) save \$4.79!

CRANE TALK

DATE: July 6, 1996

TIME: 8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Dalhousie University, Main floor of Life Sciences Centre, Lecture Theatre #240.

The Dalhousie entrance to use is straight ahead through Coburg Road main gate, at the end of Lord Dalhousie Drive. Follow the colourful cranes. As well as fund raising through admission to the presentation, there will be a raffle of a hand-painted crane-adorned tote bag with original work by Stephanie Robertson. There will also be a fund-raising pot luck supper and reception earlier in the evening. The costs are as follows:

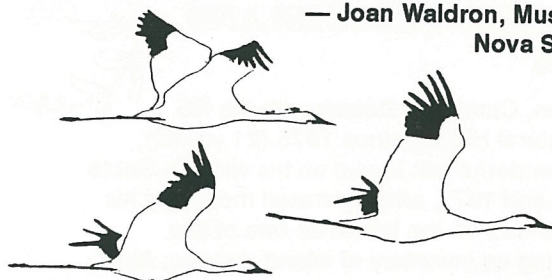
TALK: \$5 per person

RAFFLE: \$2 per ticket, or 3 for \$5

RECEPTION: \$25 per person plus pot luck contribution.

The \$25 includes admission to the presentation. You can also make a donation to ICF. For more information, contact Bernice Moores at 1361 Edward Street, Halifax, B3H 3H5, telephone 902-422-5292, or e-mail her at ae434@ccn.cs.dal.ca. Details are also available on the WWW page of the Halifax Field Naturalists.

— Joan Waldron, Museum Services
Nova Scotia Museum



NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS



Lynn Gallant
Jean Hartley
Carol Klar
Peter Oickle
Lois Oliver
Debbie Parrish
Catherine Tanner
Sue Watson & Christian Haak
Michael White
Colin Whitelock
Heather Williams

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HFN TALKS

PLIGHT OF THE PIPING PLOVER 4 APRIL 1996

Etta Parker is the hard-working and very capable coordinator of the Piping Plover Guardian Program in Nova Scotia. As well as outfitting, training, and assigning volunteers to the protection programme, she writes and distributes a Newsletter, manages the money, and has produced a 20-minute video.

Etta came to the meeting to show off the Guardians' uniform (T-shirt, anorak and cap), and to bring us up to date on the campaign to keep this plucky little bird in existence. There is now a Guardian Program in all four Atlantic Provinces, and an international Piping Plover Census will take place in the early summer.

The Piping Plover video is an entertaining account of the bird's life and times, introduced by Charlie Plover, a lively showman animated by Ken Mayfield, Rosemary MacAuley, and Etta. The photography is excellent - no wonder it took more than a year to make! The video is directed to public education and is used in training volunteers.

ALEX WILSON: SABLE ISLAND 2 MAY 1996

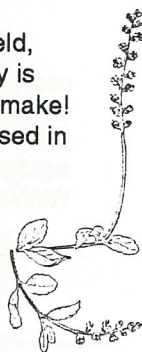
Alex Wilson, Curator of Botany with the NS Museum of Natural History since 1975 (21 years!), presented a wonderful talk based on his visits to Sable Island in 1976 and 1977, and illustrated mostly by his own slides. He was on the Island as one of five scientists making an inventory of island species; Alex documented the plants.

The data and photographs collected then and later were incorporated in the MNH travelling exhibit 'Sable Island'; this popular, longest lived, travelling exhibit has visited 11 venues all over Canada. It is due to be refurbished, and will be shown again here.

The plant slides depicted everything from American Beach Grass and Cord Grass, which hold this precarious little sand bar in existence in the wild Atlantic Ocean, to White Pines stunted by the constant wind to the height of the plant cover around the fresh water ponds.

We also saw the famous ponies, seals, and other vertebrate inhabitants, including the unique Ipswich Sparrow.

Alex told us stories about Captain James Farquahar (1842—1930), one of the legendary Maritimes sea captains, who was born on Sable, the son of an employee at the Eastern Lighthouse Station. A marble statue of Captain Farquahar stood for years at the entrance of the NSMNH, and is now in the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. His book, 'Farquahar's Luck', has inspired others besides Alex.



FNSN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7 - 9 JUNE, 1996

This event was hosted by the Annapolis Field Naturalists in Annapolis Royal, and the weather was good. The mundane arrangements for our comfort, food at appropriate intervals, and billeting and other accommodation, were amply provided by our hosts, and we thank them.

Stephanie Robertson, three directors, and half a dozen members came from HFN. Most other Nova Scotia naturalists' clubs were represented, amid an atmosphere of old friendships.

HFN had a display table in the Hall, and sold butterfly checklists and a few Field Guides to go with them. Visitors enjoyed an aquarium with salamanders and a small toad, lent by the NS Museum of Natural History; another hoptoad was added by a visitor.

The programme consisted of early morning nature walks for pure enjoyment, followed by talks and visits to sites where conservation is either taking place or is needed.

One of us visited the underwater turbine observation room, to see the mechanism which is still unfortunately killing fish, including sturgeon. Mike Dadswell talked about the damage done to fish stocks in the Annapolis River.

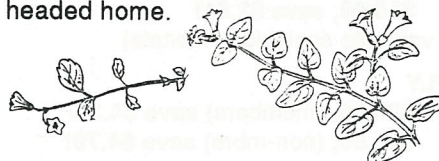
On the bright side, a wetlands conservation scheme is providing water and forage for waterfowl in Belleisle Marsh, an area almost circled by a loop of the river. We also saw the efforts to stabilise the saltmarsh around Fort Anne, a pleasant way to combine natural history with the human variety.

The Annual Meeting was a summary of achievement and its human cost. While we have all done well in conservation efforts, the Federation is without a permanent president, Alice White having stepped down.

This is something we all have to think about if a healthy environment is to be maintained, for our pleasure as well as our health. If each of us contributes one small effort towards neighbourhood health, we shall do it handily, but we mustn't depend on very few people.

The next AGM will be in Halifax; we shall be the hosts.

The weekend ended with a barbecue beside the head pond of the power plant, and ice creams purchased from the corner store with pink tickets — remember school picnics? Pleasantly sticky, we headed home.



— Ursula Grigg

FIELD TRIPS



FALCONS

DATE: Saturday, March 9, 1996

PLACE: Shearwater Airforce Base

WEATHER: Brilliantly sunny day; very cold and windy!

PARTICIPANTS: 5 children, 33 to 35 adults

INTERPRETER: Peter Serwylo, falconer for Shearwater Airforce Base

What an interesting and exhilarating day! We met at the main gatehouse at Shearwater 1 p.m. Peter Serwylo finally arrived from the base in his blue Isuzu van. Inside, on a specially constructed carpeted perch, was Baby Huey, his hooded tri-bred falcon (Gyrfalcon and Prairie Falcon x European Saker). Our convoy of cars then trailed up to a higher, manned gatehouse, where each of us relinquished a piece of identification in exchange for a visitor's pass to affix to our coats. Onwards again in the cars, parking in a lot nearer to the fields and outbuildings where administration of the annual Shearwater airshows usually takes place. There we met Chris Dean, secretary of the N.S. Falconer's Association, with his broad-winged hawk Areka, a Harris's Hawk from Southern States and Middle America. After a few preliminary words in the cold, we assembled inside to hear Peter and Chris present a short history of falconry, or hawking, and various other aspects of training these wonderful birds.

Falcons are aerialistic acrobats which hunt in the more open fields and barrens of Nova Scotia, in comparison to the accipiters (Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk) which prefer the edges of dense woodland thickets. Characteristically, all falcons have long, pointed wings which cross at the back when closed. They will chase their prey for miles, making repeated hunting attempts for the same quarry.

Broad-winged hawks' wings are more rounded. These birds will make one or two attempts at a quarry, then 'go-to-tree.' They hunt in short, intense bursts, travelling at high speeds for 500 feet or so, then giving up to rest. Red-tailed Hawks will wait patiently in woodlands near roads for hapless small road-crossers! Generally, all birds of prey are opportunistic. Females usually hunt for larger prey than the males do because they are about one third larger than their mates.

Gyrfalcons and Peregrine Falcons are extremely skilled aerialists, constantly making fast dives and sudden stops during their hunting. They have very large strong feet for plucking their prey out of mid-air. They prefer to be downwind and above their

quarry and also have a preference for 'surprise attack', usually going for the head or neck, and then breaking it between the vertebrae with their beaks.

Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles have the strongest claw grasp. Hawks have huge feet but usually hunt something smaller than themselves. They have learning capabilities as to what they can hunt successfully.

Hawks and falcons used for hunting have to be trained to accept being 'hooded'. The gently tied-on hood, usually made of leather with decorative ribbons and/or feathers, helps keep the birds calm and conditions them to know there will be quarry available as soon as the hood is removed.

To begin training for manned hunting, the birds are brought to their 'fat weight'. Then their body weights are reduced by 10 to 15% to keep them slightly hungry and anxious to hunt. In the wild they can go ten days without food so this is not cruel. Broad-winged hawks usually weigh about 37 - 40 oz., kestrels 7 oz, and gyrfalcons about 50 oz. Food is given on the tough, leather gauntlet which are used while holding and carrying the birds, and repeated until that association (glove and food) is achieved. During this period of training, progressively stronger bonding takes place between the falconer and his bird, and food is taken from the glove more readily. In this way, the weight of the bird is kept at its optimum flying weight. Food is gradually offered farther and farther away from the glove, and various worded or whistled commands are introduced to train the bird to come to its meal. With hawks, the distance is slowly increased to 250 feet or more with the 'glove/food' training. The aim is to get them to return from at least half a mile.



Gradually a lure resembling prey is used to attract the bird back; this lure is swung round and round the handler's head on a long line. For hawks, the lure resembles a hare or small mammal; falcons are trained to come back to a lure resembling a small bird (Peter had a bird wing as his lure). A food reward is given on its return, and the distance that it has to fly back is slowly increased. 'Manning the bird' is a falconry term for working and hunting with it after the hood and leg leash and swivel (to hold bird to glove) have been removed leaving only the 'jesses'. These are the short straps of leather, or more traditionally of silk, that remain on the bird's leg.

Birds do get lost during hunting; Peter has lost four birds in his 25 years of falconry. His main task as falconer for Shearwater is to keep the area free from flocks of birds that could dangerously interfere with the aeroplanes.

Trained raptors must be flown regularly to keep strong and supple or their muscles become stiff. Peter does not fly his birds in extreme wind and rain, feeling that it is unfair to do so. Baby Huey is now ten years old and will live 15 or 20 years more in captivity.

During this indoor talk, I had the marvelous experience of holding Baby Huey and admiring her wonderful plumage at very close range, while Peter went off within the building to do something else. He had carefully manoeuvred the glove from his hand to mine with hooded Baby Huey still upon it! Meanwhile the welcome sun had come out in full force to allay the icy cold outside. With Peter's return, we moved out to the demonstration area where Chris Dean flew Areka for us several times. After a few short flights, she did the characteristically hawk-like stopping to rest from her labours by roosting on not a tree, but (we hope) a warm chimney on a nearby outbuilding!

Then, in a broad, open snowy airfield, Peter let fly the more experienced Baby Huey, who impressed us all with her aerial manoeuvres circling and flashing in the brilliant sky, answering Peter's calls and whirling lure with skilful stooping and diving. It was a beautiful example of the dependable bonding and training that can take place between trainer and falcon, as we all squinted up into the clear winter blue sky at this marvellous, one-bird, feathered airshow.

Thank you Peter and Chris for a knowledgeable and skilled demonstration and talk.

— Stephanie Robertson



Spotted Salamander

Ambystoma maculatum



SALAMANDER MEANDER

DATE: Thursday, April 1, 1996

PLACE: Julie's Pond, Bedford

WEATHER: Cool and misty

PARTICIPANTS: 30+

Well, summer was still a way off yet. Matter of fact, it was darn cold! And yet the Yellow-spotted Salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*), were feeling amorous.

Julie's Pond, in Hemlock Ravine Park at the end of Kent Avenue, Rockingham, is a great spot to become a spring 'peeper'. The salamanders have bred in this heart-shaped pond for years, and don't mind being watched. John Gilhen, retired Museum Curator of Herpetology, has been studying and counting these amphibians for a long time. Yearly, he visits the pond to count and observe, making it a visitor's programme sponsored by the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. This year, John agreed to do an extra 'salamander meander' for the Halifax Field Naturalists.

So off we went, armed with flashlights and shod with rubber boots. We met John at dusk and he gave us a quick lesson on identification of the Yellow-spotted Salamander, and also showed us a blue-spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*) that he had brought with him. The Blue-spotted is not a resident of Halifax. Due to the fact it prefers more alkali soil, it can be found north and west of Halifax, in areas that boast gypsum.

When we knew what we were looking for, we began to search expectantly into the shallow pond's waters. Soon, cries of "I got one", were echoing through the trees surrounding the pond. We tallied about 60 salamanders that evening, not quite as many as on the previous night when the MNH walk

took place; but everyone got to see the target species, and I think all were satisfied. (Excepting John, who hoped to count upwards of 200!)

A couple of additional treats awaited us as well; we got to rub shoulders with the press! A columnist from a Halifax paper attended the outing, and published an article about our trip.

And — we heard at least three Wood Frogs (*Rana sylvatica*), calling from the pond. A surprise manifested itself when my very own son Bill pulled an Eastern Painted Turtle from the leaf litter that covers the bottom. John was happy to remove it from the habitat, because it was a predator of the eggs and tadpoles of not only salamanders, but also the several other frog species that breed there. John has since ensured that the turtle has a happy new home in a prime turtle habitat area.

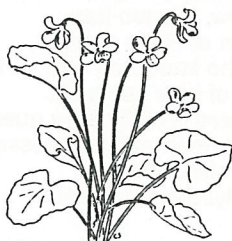
But you know that turtles are not the only problem predator in Julie's Pond and lots of other locations around Nova Scotia. Wild Goldfish have managed to be very fruitful and multiply like mad! I have personally counted over 300 in a single school, and have noted that they range in size from one inch to about 12 to 14 inches. This confirms that they have indeed adapted 'very-well-thank-you' and pose a major threat both in the decline of the Yellow-spotted 'Sallies' and the decline of the Spring Peepers (*Hyla crucifer*) that has been the trend over the last few years in Julie's Pond.

Time was, John told me, that he was able to count two to three hundred Yellow Spotted's in Julie's Pond on any given seasonal night.

Although we only counted 60 or so 'sallies' in the pond this time, I did visit there a couple of days later on my own while looking for Spring Peepers, and saw more Yellow Spotted's; in fact I counted 170! An impressive number, but still not the two to three hundred of the past counts.

Our trip was an eye-opening experience for all involved. Thank you, John.

— Cathy Fulton



CAPE SPLIT

DATE: Sunday, June 2, 1996

PLACE: Cape Split, Hants County

WEATHER: Warm and sunny - 20°+; no blackflies or mosquitoes!

PARTICIPANTS: 30

INTERPRETER: Lesley Butters

Cape Split is the outermost point of the Blomidon Peninsula, located in King's County, Nova Scotia. Its dramatic 100-metre cliffs separate Scots Bay from Minas Basin. The walk is an approximately 16 km round trip, starting at Scots Bay, through a coniferous forest which gradually changes to deciduous cover (not fully leafed out yet) and then to open fields at the end of the cape, walking along the northern side. On the return trip after lunch, the trail continues back along the southern cliffs of Scots Bay to a sheltered, rocky beach, then back up to return onto the main trail.

Lesley Butters led this enthusiastic group on one of HFN's favourite annual field trips; it was also listed in the Halifax Hiking Club's program.

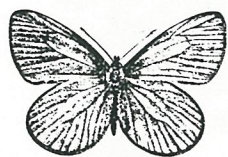
A list of the plants in flower is below. The Wake Robin Trillium and the Spring Beauty were the most abundant of the spring flowers.

Wake Robin	<i>Trillium erectum</i>
Spring Beauty	<i>Claytonia caroliniana</i>
Twisted-stalk	<i>Streptopus amplexifolius</i>
Purple Violet	<i>Viola cucullata</i>
White Violet	<i>Viola pallens</i>
Red Baneberry	<i>Actaea rubra</i>
Dutchman's Breeches	<i>Dicentra cucullaria</i>
Wild Sasparilla	<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>
Starry False Solomon's Seal	<i>Smilacina stellata</i>
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>

Starry False Solomon's Seal and Wild Strawberry were found in the open areas above the cliffs of Scots Bay.

There were fledgeling Black-backed Gulls and nesting cormorants on the rock pinnacles of Cape Split. We saw a small porcupine and met an estimated 100 hikers on the trail!

— John Stanton



Silvery Blue



Harvester

BUTTERFLIES

DATE: Saturday, June 22, 1996

PLACE: Various meadows near Oakfield Provincial Park

WEATHER: Sunny, warm, calm

INTERPRETERS: Peter and Linda Payzant, Fred Scott *ex officio*

PARTICIPANTS: 21

The trip was scheduled for Saturday with a rain date of Sunday, but the forecast on Friday afternoon was so pessimistic that we called the Nova Scotia Museum and cancelled the trip.

Perversely, Saturday morning was sunny and calm. Another 'bust' from AES, but this time, in the right direction. We called the security guard at the museum to tell him that the trip was on again, got in touch with a few people we had warned off the night before, and headed out to Oakfield to wait for the participants.

The weather was sunny and calm, all right, but with half an hour to go before the trip began, it was barely 10 degrees, far too cold for most butterflies to get off the ground. However, the temperature rose rapidly, lots of butterfly fans showed up, and by the time we reached the end of our first meadow, one youngster proudly pointed out the first butterfly of the day, a tiny but pretty Arctic Skipper. Soon after we saw the first of many Tiger Swallowtails, and one of the first White Admirals of the year basked on the warm gravel beside the railway track, getting his temperature up to the flying point.

A few hundred metres away in our second meadow, we encountered a real surprise: the first Ringlets the leaders had ever seen in Nova Scotia apart from Briar Island. These seem to be a recent arrival here, probably expansion from colonies in New Brunswick. While the participants watched, Peter knelt down in the grass and gently lowered a net over one of them, transferring it to a bottle for all to admire. The butterfly was released as soon as everyone had had a good look, and we repeated this technique several times during the trip.

This same meadow had a large patch of Violets (alas, past the flowering stage) growing in a low, damp area. This no doubt was the reason for a booming colony of Silver-Bordered Fritillaries. Later we got a chance to see a Pearl Crescent, which can be mistaken for a Fritillary, unless you know that Frits have silver spots on the underside of the wings, and the Pearl Crescent doesn't.

All told, we saw thirteen species of butterfly, and the trip ended with several of us seeing a Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius*) bounding away in the grass, stopping to look at us from a range of a few metres, and then bounding away again.

Butterfly Species Seen:

Cdn. Tiger Swallowtail	<i>Papilio canadensis</i>
Cabbage Butterfly	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
Sulphur sp.	<i>Colias sp.</i>
Little Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
Silvery Blue	<i>Glaucopsyche lygdamus</i>
Silver-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>
Northern Pearl Crescent	<i>Phyciodes selenis</i>
White Admiral	<i>Limenitis arthemis</i>
Ringlet	<i>Coenonympha tullia</i>
Dreamy Dusky Wing	<i>Erynnis icelus</i>
Arctic Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus</i>
<i>palaemon</i>	
Long Dash	<i>Polites mystic</i>
Hobomok Skipper	<i>Polites hobomok</i>

— Peter Payzant



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail



The Butterfly

The butterfly, a cabbage-white,
(his honest idiocy of flight)
Will never now, it is too late,
Master the art of flying straight,
Yet has — who knows so well as I? —
A just sense of how not to fly:
He lurches here and there by guess
And God and hope and hopelessness.
Even the aerobatic swift
Has not his flying-crooked gift.

— Robert Graves

ALMANAC





This almanac is for the dates of events which are not found in our program: for field trips or lectures which members might like to attend, or natural happenings to watch for, such as eclipses, comets, average migration dates, expected blooming seasons, etc. Please suggest other suitable items.

Lady Grey showed an especial interest in Canadian wildflowers and before she left had brought together quite a large number of the more ornamental species at Government House. So keen was her desire to see Canadian wildflowers growing in their native wilds that she visited out of the way places to do so. One instance of which the writer has personal knowledge was a trip to see the showy lady's slipper (*Cypripedium spectabile*) in a distant bog. Neither heat nor mosquitoes daunted her, but pulling on a pair of rubber boots she entered the swamp and saw these lovely flowers in great abundance.

— William Terril Macoun, in "Lady Grey and the Gardens at Rideau Hall" (1912)

NATURAL EVENTS

20 June	Summer Solstice at 11:24 p.m. ADT: Summer begins	
JULY	Jupiter rises in the southeast at sunset	
12 July	Venus near the waning crescent moon	
mid-July	Shorebirds begin to reappear, after nesting in their northern breeding grounds — migration continues for several months	
12 — 13 July	Eighth Annual Atlantic Earth Festival at the Garrison Grounds	
15 July	Parks Day — look for events at Provincial Parks; posters around Halifax	
30 July	Moon reaches its 1996 perigee (closest to the earth), resulting in large ocean tides, in areas such as the Bay of Fundy	
early AUGUST		
— mid-Sept.	Blueberry season in Nova Scotia — look for festivals around the province	
5 — 12 August	Hottest days of summer (average daily maximum is 22.5 C.)	
13 August	Temperatures start decreasing	
mid-August	Migration of shorebirds peaks	
10 — 12 August	Atlantic Waterfowl Celebration in Sackville, N.B.	
11 — 12 August	Perseid meteor shower peaks: rate 15-30 per hour	
15 — 18 August	"Rockhound Roundup" in Parrsboro	
SEPTEMBER	The busiest month for most fall migrating birds	
4 September	Venus and Mars are close together in the pre-dawn eastern sky	
mid-September	Comet Hale-Bopp should be visible to the naked eye	
22 September	Autumnal Equinox at 3:00 p.m. ADT: Fall begins	
26/27 September	Total eclipse of the moon: from 10:12 p.m. to 1:36 a.m.; the total phase lasts 70 minutes	
27 September	Full moon — this is the "Harvest Moon"	

Sources — Atmospheric Environment Service, *Climatic Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.* (thanks to Peter Payzant for this); Blomidon Naturalists Society, *A Natural History of King's County, 1992*; Colombo's *Canadian Global Almanac, 1996*; Dickinson's "Night Watch" column; Erskine's *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces, 1992*; Gibson's *Summer Nature Notes for Nova Scotians, 1982*; Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's *Observer's Handbook, 1996*; Tufts' *Birds of Nova Scotia, 1986*; the personal observations of the compiler.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON SUMMER AND EARLY FALL SATURDAYS

1 June	5:32	20:53	6 July	5:36	21:02
8 June	5:29	20:58	13 July	5:42	20:58
15 June	5:28	21:02	20 July	5:48	20:53
22 June	5:29	21:04	27 July	5:55	20:46
29 June	5:32	21:04			
3 August	6:03	20:37	7 Sept.	6:44	19:39
10 August	6:11	20:16	14 Sept.	6:52	19:26
17 August	6:19	20:16	21 Sept.	7:01	19:13
24 August	6:28	20:05	28 Sept.	7:09	19:00
31 August	6:36	19:52			



— courtesy of David Lane,
Burke-Gaffney Observatory, St. Mary's University

ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

Blomidon Naturalists Society — Indoor meetings take place on 3rd Monday of the month, Room 244 in the Beveridge Arts Centre, Acadia University, 7:30 p.m. No meetings in July or August.

13 July "Dragonflies" with Tom Herman. Meet at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Wolfville at 10:00 a.m.

17 July "Life in the Blomidon Mud" with Sherman Boates. Meet at Blomidon Provincial Park at 6:00 p.m.
Phone 679-6091 for more info.

3 Aug. "Shorebirds of the Minas Basin" with Sherman Boates. Meet at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Wolfville, at 11:30 a.m. Bring rubber boots.

11 Aug. "The summer night sky" with Roy Bishop. Meet at the Grand Pré parking lot at 9:00 p.m. Cloud date is 12 Aug.

Dartmouth Volksmarch Club — Meets for organised walks, at least 10K, every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Pick up their schedule at the Trail Shop on Quinpool Road, or ph. 435-5252 for info.

Friends of McNabs Island — More info. ph. Dusan Soudek, 422-1045 or Mike Tilley, 465-4563.

22 Sept. Fall Beach Sweep. Depart from the Cable Wharf at 10:00 a.m.

20 Oct. Fall Foliage Foray. Depart from the Cable Wharf at 10:00 a.m.

Mainland South Heritage Society — Meetings take place on last Thursday of the month at the Captain William Spry Centre in Spryfield, 7:30 p.m. Outings usually last 3-4 hours, and can be rugged; wear sturdy footwear. Ph. 443-9633 for more info.

25 Aug. Old Prospect Road. Meet at the Capt. William Spry Centre at 1 p.m.

8 Sept. Pennant Point. Meet at the Capt. William Spry Centre at 1 p.m.

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic — Programs are usually on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. More info. ph. 424-7490.

Nova Scotia Bird Society — Meets 4th Thursday of month, Sept. to April, at the NSMNH, 8 p.m. More info ph. 852-2428 or <http://cfn.cs.dal.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc/nsbnmain.html>. Much more info on their 'Bird Information Line' — ph. 852-CHAT.

22 June "Cumberland County" with Fulton Lavender, 455-4966.

21 July "Wallace Bay Area" with Jim Taylor, 434-8516.

27 July "President's Field Day, Crescent Beach" with Lise Cohrs, 477-6036.

10 Aug. "Pictou County" with Ken McKenna, 752-7644.

10 Aug. "Yarmouth Area" with Eric Ruff, 742-8145.



Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History — Programs are usually on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Ph. 424-6099 or 424-7353.

22 June "Bat Tour" with Andrew Hebda. Meet at Smiley's Prov. Park, Hants County, at 9:00 p.m. Bring a flashlight. For more info phone 424-3563.

6 July "Butterflies" with Peter and Linda Payzant. Meet at Oakfield Provincial Park at 10:00 a.m. Raindate is 7 July.

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society — Meets 4th Monday of the month, Sept. to April, at the NSMNH, 7:30 p.m. More info ph. Heather Drope at 423-7032 (daytime only), or <http://fox.nstn.ns.ca:80/~csensen/>

23 June Heather Drope will lead a walk in West Chezzetcook. Meet at the Porters Lake Shopping Centre at 10:00 a.m. Ph. 423-7032 (daytime only).

24 June Reta Cook will lead a walk in Cranberry Cove. Meet at the road to Cranberry Cove, 1 km. east of the road into Peggy's Cove, at 6:30 p.m. Ph. 423-2415.

29/30 June Carl Munden will lead a walk in the Economy Falls and Ward's Brook area of Colchester County. Meet at the Five Islands Prov. Park campground at 10:00 a.m. each day. Ph. 829-3633.

6 July Aylesford Lake, Kings County with Carl Munden. Meet at the parking lot at Aylesford Lake Public Beach at 10:00 a.m. Phone 829-3633.

Orchid Society of Nova Scotia — Meets 2nd Sunday of the month, Sept. to June, at the NSMNH, 7:30 p.m. Orchids are usually on display. More info ph. Jean Hartley, 443-3080, or ip-osns@cfn.cs.dal.ca

18-20 Oct. The Canadian Orchid Congress and an American Orchid Society judged show will be held in Halifax.

Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia — Meets 2nd Monday as well as the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, at the NSMNH, 7:30 p.m. Special Seminars and Shows are at St. Mary's University, Theatre A, Burke Education Centre. More info ph. Branimir Gjetvaj at 422-3407.

? Sept. Fall Show, Burke Education Centre, St. Mary's University, 8 p.m.

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax Chapter) — Public presentations at 7 p.m. on most Thursdays at the Planetarium in the Sir James Dunn Building, Dalhousie University. These last about an hour.

19 July "Star Watch". Meet at Dollar Lake Prov. Park at 9:00 p.m. More info ph. Paul Gray 864-2145. Cloud date 20 July.

23 Aug. "Star Watch". Meet at Dollar Lake Prov. Park at 9:00 p.m. More info ph. Paul Gray 864-2145. Cloud date 24 Aug.

Department of Natural Resources' Parks are for People Program, is an annual listing of many events held at various park from May to November. Pick up a program at your local library, or ph. Susan Hruszowy at DNR, 424-4321, for other locations.

TIDE TABLE



July-juillet

August-août

September-septembre

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m	Jour	Heure	H./pi	H./m	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m	Jour	Heure	H./pi	H./m	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m	Jour	Heure	H./pi	H./m
1	0200	-0.1	0.0	16	0230	0.6	0.2	1	0325	-0.4	-0.1	16	0300	0.8	0.2	1	0445	0.3	0.1	16	0340	1.1	0.3
MO	0755	5.8	1.8	17	0835	5.4	1.6	2	0920	6.4	2.0	17	0920	5.7	1.7	2	1030	6.4	2.0	17	0955	5.9	1.8
LU	1415	0.8	0.2	TU	1440	1.4	0.4	TH	1550	0.6	0.2	FR	1520	1.2	0.4	SU	1720	0.6	0.2	MO	1615	1.1	0.3
	2005	6.5	2.0	MA	2040	5.6	1.7	JE	2135	6.5	2.0	VE	2130	5.5	1.7	DI	2250	5.9	1.8	LU	2215	5.4	1.6
2	0250	-0.3	-0.1	17	0300	0.7	0.2	2	0420	-0.2	-0.1	17	0335	0.9	0.3	2	0540	0.7	0.2	17	0425	1.3	0.4
MO	0850	6.0	1.8	18	0910	5.5	1.7	3	1010	6.5	2.0	18	0950	5.7	1.7	3	1115	6.1	1.9	17	1030	5.8	1.8
TU	1510	0.8	0.2	WE	1510	1.4	0.4	FR	1650	0.7	0.2	SA	1600	1.3	0.4	MO	1820	0.8	0.2	TU	1705	1.2	0.4
MA	2100	6.5	2.0	ME	2120	5.6	1.7	VE	2225	6.3	1.9	SA	2205	5.4	1.6	LU	2340	5.5	1.7	MA	2255	5.2	1.6
3	0345	-0.3	-0.1	18	0335	0.8	0.2	3	0515	0.1	0.0	18	0410	1.0	0.3	3	0635	1.1	0.3	18	0510	1.5	0.5
MO	0940	6.2	1.9	19	0950	5.5	1.7	4	1055	6.3	1.9	19	1025	5.7	1.7	4	1200	5.7	1.7	18	1110	5.7	1.7
WE	1605	0.8	0.2	TH	1545	1.4	0.4	SA	1750	0.7	0.2	SU	1640	1.3	0.4	MA	1915	1.0	0.3	WE	1805	1.3	0.4
ME	2150	6.4	2.0	JE	2155	5.4	1.6	SA	2315	5.9	1.8	DI	2240	5.2	1.6	ME	2340	5.1	1.6	ME	2340	5.1	1.6
4	0440	-0.2	-0.1	19	0405	0.9	0.3	4	0610	0.4	0.1	19	0450	1.2	0.4	4	0030	5.2	1.6	19	0610	1.7	0.5
MO	1030	6.2	1.9	20	1025	5.5	1.7	5	1145	6.1	1.9	20	1100	5.6	1.7	5	0730	1.5	0.5	19	1155	5.6	1.7
TH	1710	0.9	0.3	FR	1625	1.5	0.5	6	1850	0.8	0.2	21	1730	1.4	0.4	6	1250	5.3	1.6	TH	1910	1.3	0.4
JE	2240	6.2	1.9	VE	2235	5.3	1.6	SA	0005	5.6	1.7	22	0535	1.3	0.4	ME	2010	1.1	0.3	JE			
5	0535	0.0	0.0	20	0440	1.0	0.3	5	0705	0.8	0.2	20	1140	5.5	1.7	5	0125	4.8	1.5	20	0030	4.9	1.5
MO	1120	6.2	1.9	21	1100	5.5	1.7	6	1235	5.8	1.8	21	1825	1.4	0.4	6	0830	1.7	0.5	20	0720	1.9	0.6
FR	1815	1.0	0.3	SA	1710	1.5	0.5	MO	1945	0.9	0.3	22	0000	4.9	1.5	TH	1345	5.1	1.6	FR	1250	5.4	1.6
VE	2335	5.9	1.8	SA	2310	5.1	1.6	LU	0100	5.2	1.6	23	0630	1.5	0.5	JE	2105	1.2	0.4	VE	2015	1.2	0.4
6	0635	0.3	0.1	21	0525	1.2	0.4	6	0800	1.1	0.3	24	0000	4.9	1.5	6	0230	4.6	1.4	21	0135	4.8	1.5
SA	1210	6.0	1.8	22	1135	5.5	1.7	7	1325	5.5	1.7	25	0630	1.5	0.5	6	0925	1.9	0.6	21	0835	1.9	0.6
SA	1915	1.0	0.3	SU	1800	1.6	0.5	MA	2040	1.0	0.3	26	1220	5.5	1.7	FR	1445	4.9	1.5	SA	1355	5.3	1.6
7	0030	5.5	1.7	DI	2345	5.0	1.5	TH	0100	5.2	1.6	27	1930	1.4	0.4	VE	2155	1.3	0.4	SA	2120	1.1	0.3
MO	0730	0.6	0.2	23	0610	1.3	0.4	8	0855	1.4	0.4	28	0050	4.7	1.4	7	0345	4.6	1.4	22	0255	4.9	1.5
LU	1305	5.8	1.8	24	1210	5.4	1.6	9	1420	5.2	1.6	29	0730	1.7	0.5	7	1015	2.0	0.6	22	0940	1.8	0.5
DI	2015	1.0	0.3	25	1855	1.6	0.5	ME	2135	1.0	0.3	30	1315	5.4	1.6	SA	1555	4.9	1.5	SU	1510	5.4	1.6
8	0125	5.2	1.6	26	0030	4.8	1.5	TH	0305	4.6	1.4	31	2030	1.3	0.4	SA	2245	1.3	0.4	DI	2220	0.9	0.3
MO	0825	0.9	0.3	27	0700	1.5	0.5	8	0955	1.6	0.5	1	0150	4.6	1.4	8	0450	4.8	1.5	23	0415	5.2	1.6
LU	1400	5.6	1.7	28	1255	5.3	1.6	9	1525	5.1	1.6	2	0835	1.8	0.5	8	1105	1.9	0.6	23	1045	1.6	0.5
	2110	1.0	0.3	MA	1955	1.5	0.5	JE	2230	1.0	0.3	3	1415	5.3	1.6	SU	1655	5.1	1.6	MO	1625	5.6	1.7
9	0230	4.9	1.5	24	0120	4.6	1.4	10	0420	4.6	1.4	4	2135	1.1	0.3	DI	2335	1.2	0.4	LU	2315	0.6	0.2
MO	0920	1.2	0.4	25	0755	1.6	0.5	11	1050	1.7	0.5	5	0310	4.7	1.4	9	0540	5.0	1.5	24	0520	5.6	1.7
TU	1500	5.4	1.6	26	1345	5.3	1.6	12	1630	5.1	1.6	6	0945	1.7	0.5	9	1155	1.8	0.5	24	1145	1.3	0.4
MA	2205	1.0	0.3	27	2050	1.4	0.4	13	2325	1.0	0.3	7	1530	5.4	1.6	MO	1745	5.3	1.6	TU	1730	5.9	1.8
10	0340	4.8	1.5	28	0220	4.6	1.4	14	0520	4.8	1.5	8	2235	0.9	0.3	LU				MA			
MO	1020	1.4	0.4	29	0855	1.6	0.5	15	1140	1.7	0.5	9	0310	4.7	1.4	10	0015	1.1	0.3	25	0015	0.3	0.1
WE	1600	5.3	1.6	30	1445	5.3	1.6	16	1725	5.2	1.6	10	0945	1.7	0.5	10	0625	5.3	1.6	25	0615	6.1	1.9
ME	2300	0.9	0.3	31	2155	1.2	0.4	17	SA			11	1530	5.4	1.6	11	1235	1.6	0.5	WE	1240	0.9	0.3
11	0445	4.8	1.5	1	0330	4.6	1.4	18	SU			12	2235	0.5	0.2	11	1830	5.4	1.6	ME	1825	6.2	1.9
MO	1115	1.5	0.5	2	1000	1.6	0.5	19	0010	0.9	0.3	13	0535	5.3	1.6	12	0015	1.1	0.3	26	0105	0.1	0.0
TH	1700	5.4	1.6	3	1555	5.5	1.7	20	0610	5.0	1.5	14	1155	1.3	0.4	12	0700	5.5	1.7	26	0705	6.5	2.0
JE	2355	0.8	0.2	4	2255	0.9	0.3	21	1225	1.6	0.5	15	1745	6.0	1.8	13	1310	1.4	0.4	TH	1335	0.6	0.2
12	0545	4.9	1.5	5	0445	4.8	1.5	22	1810	5.4	1.6	16	0050	5.3	1.6	14	1910	5.6	1.7	JE	1920	6.4	2.0
MO	1210	1.5	0.5	6	1105	1.4	0.4	23	0055	0.8	0.2	17	0700	5.5	1.7	15	0050	1.0	0.3	27	0155	0.1	0.0
FR	1750	5.4	1.6	7	1700	5.8	1.8	24	0650	5.2	1.6	18	1310	1.4	0.4	16	0700	5.5	1.7	27	0750	6.7	2.0
VE				8	2355	0.5	0.2	25	1305	1.5	0.5	19	1745	6.0	1.8	17	1310	1.4	0.4	FR	1425	0.4	0.1
13	0040	0.7	0.2	9	0550	5.2	1.6	26	1855	5.5	1.7	20	0035	0.1	0.0	18	1910	5.6	1.7	ME	2005	6.5	2.0
MO	0630	5.1	1.6	10	1210	1.2	0.4	27	0055	0.8	0.2	21	0630	5.8	1.8	19	0125	1.0	0.3	27	0155	0.1	0.0
SA	1255	1.5	0.5	11	1800	6.1	1.9	28	0650	5.2	1.6	22	1255	1.0	0.3	20	0735	5.7	1.7	28	0245	0.1	0.0
SA	1835	5.5	1.7	12	SU			29	1340	1.4	0.4	23	1840	6.3	1.9	21	1345	1.2	0.4	28	0835	6.7	2.0
14	0125	0.6	0.2	13	DI			30	1935	5.6	1.7	24	0125	-0.1	0.0	22	1950	5.6	1.7	29	1515	0.3	0.1
MO	0715	5.2	1.6	14	0050	0.1	0.0	31	0130	0.8	0.2	25	0725	6.2	1.9	23	0200	0.9	0.3	30	2055	6.4	2.0
TH	1335	1.4	0.4	15	0645	5.6	1.7	1	0730	5.4	1.6	26	1350	0.7	0.2	24	0810	5.8	1.8	31			
DI	1920	5.6	1.7	16	1305	1.0	0.3	2	1340	1.4	0.4	27	1935	6.5	2.0	25	1420	1.1	0.3	1			
15	0200	0.6	0.2	17	1855	6.3	1.9	3	1935	5.6	1.7	28	0125	-0.1	0.0	26	1950	5.6	1.7	2			
MO	0755	5.3	1.6	18	0050	0.1	0.0	4	0200	0.7	0.2	29	0725	6.2	1.9	27	0230	0.9	0.3	3			
LU	1410	1.4	0.4	19	0645	5.6	1.7	5	0810	5.5	1.7	30	1350	0.7	0.2	28	0845	5.9	1.8	4			
	2000	5.6	1.7	20	1305	1.0	0.3	6	1410	1.3	0.4	31	1935	6.5	2.0	29	1455	1.0	0.3	5			
16	0230	0.6	0.2	21	1855	6.3	1.9	7	2015	5.6	1.7	1	0125	-0.3	-0.1	30	2100	5.6	1.7	6			
17	0300	0.7	0.2	22	0050	0.1	0.0	8	0200	0.7	0.2	2	0810	5.5	1.7	31	0305	1.0	0.3	7			
18	0910	5.5	1.7	23	0645	5.6	1.7	9	0810	5.5	1.7	3	1440	0.5	0.2	1	0920	5.9	1.8	8			
19	1510	1.4	0.4	24	1305	1.0	0.3																



NATURE NOTES

Spring Sightings April — In Point Pleasant Park Pat Chalmers saw a sluggish Thick-billed Murre; also a female Hairy Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglets "singing like mad", both Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches, a Brown Creeper, and a Mourning Dove cooing away. On Oak Street on Saturday, March 30, Pat spotted a Painted Lady Butterfly.

Richard Hatch spied a part albino Fox Sparrow and American Bitterns in West Chezzetcook; at Conrad's Beach, Grackles and a Louisiana Heron were seen.

On May 9, a Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen in Point Pleasant.

Summer Sightings June — Gareth Harding reported that a Hooded Merganser was rescued from the chimney of a seasonal residence in Wentworth Valley. This rescue was successful - and fortuitous, as there are usually no people there this time of year. Last year, (they try to build nests in the chimneys), another Hooded Merganser wasn't so lucky, and had to be extracted dead. Gareth is going to cover the chimney with mesh, and build some nesting boxes for these wonderful birds.

! NEXT DEADLINE !
5 AUGUST FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE

contributions to the Editor, HFN
c/o NS Museum of Natural History

Please phone 455-8160 to alert the editor