

THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST



No. 88
September to November 1997



Melmerby Beach, Pictou County, Nova Scotia

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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 Are held, except for July and August, 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	\$13.00 per year
Family	\$19.00 per year
Supporting	\$25.00 per year
FNSN (opt.)	\$5.00 per year

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Internet <<http://chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/FieldNaturalists/fieldnat.html>> **Nature N. S.** — subscribe to <naturens@chebucto.ca>

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HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL

One of the several harvest moons is hanging among the leaves of our one remaining Black Locust tree these nights, and the stars come out bright and early when the skies are clear. There are good crops of Mountain Ash berries and Floribunda Rose hips for the robins as they loiter on their journeys south. Harvests have been good for people too — after the drought; the cheese-maker from Economy says he made very little hay, but other crops have been abundant enough to pay for extra winter feed for his cows.

We are trying an experiment in this Newsletter, by taking the Latin names of plants and animals out of the text. They can either be listed immediately after the article, or saved for a special issue at the end of the year. We're doing this in order to keep text flexible and easy to read, because the Latin names are often repetitive and seldom add to the story. When they are part of the story, they will remain in the text.

Will you please let one of the Newsletter Committee know what you think of this innovation? People's reasons for using specific names vary, and it may be that we should leave them in. In any case, our dedication to accurate identification and correct nomenclature won't change a bit.

FALCONRY TALK

We are looking forward to having Peter Serwylo back for another programme about the ancient sport of falconry.

As the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History could not give us the auditorium for our usual monthly meeting day of the first Thursday of the month, please note that this programme will take place on **Wednesday, 7 January**.

Peter will be bringing some of his raptors with him, and a video showing raptors in working form! Once again this should promise to be a very rewarding and interesting programme.

CONDOLENCES

HFN members will mourn with Connie Eaton over the loss of the irrepressible Sam. Some of us knew him as a participant in field trips when he was a youngster, and many of us knew him as Connie's loving companion.

His death brings home the growing problem of biocides, some of them as close as next-door's lawn.

There has also been a suggestion that the drugs in Sentinel enhance the action of lawn chemicals; Connie is researching this possibility, but has been unable to obtain some of the literature so far.

This is the second pesticide death of a dog friend for some of us; a Halifax West dog died a couple of years ago after walking through liquid which ran off a newly sprayed lawn on to the sidewalk. He cleaned off his paws when he got home and died four days later from kidney failure. This death was not associated with any veterinary drugs.

— Ursula Grigg

SEPTEMBER

The golden-rod is yellow,
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
In every meadow-nook;
And asters by the brookside
Make asters in the brook.

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of wealth
And autumn's best of cheer.

— Helen Hunt Jackson

NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

Anne Mills
Barbara Glover
Cary & Lillian Risley
Joyce Halpern, and Bob & E. Kanygin
Timothy Allison
Joan Czupalay
S. Outram

SPECIAL REPORTS

HFN TALKS AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

Land Use and Stewardship of Local Parks and Protected Areas

Oliver Maass, a dedicated outdoorsman who works as a land-use planner for Halifax's huge Regional Municipality, introduced us to the five areas in this jurisdiction which are proposed for protected status. His map, which also included crown lands and provincial parks, showed clearly how much wild and potential recreational space there is close to our big city. We are extremely lucky to have so much at the end of the 20th century.

Oliver introduced us to our five areas with slides, which incidentally identified some of the places we see from the air near Halifax.

Two areas — Tangier - Grand Lake, and Musquodoboit Harbour - White Lake — are mostly used by paddlers; both are hard of access unless one knows the route. The former is covered with typical boreal forest nearing maturity, the latter is covered with climax forest.

Martinique Beach is a long and beautiful sweep of sand, highly vulnerable to rearrangement by storms.

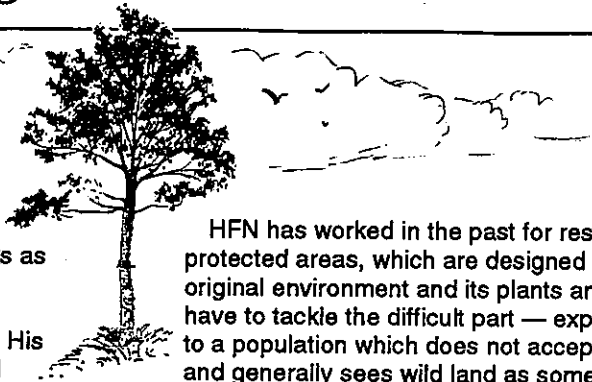
Then there's Clattenburg Rock, with folded bedrock and stands of Black Spruce, and Dollar Lake Provincial Park nearby. Very near to home is the strip containing Waverley Game Reserve, Salmon River, and Long Lake, with Jack Pine stands on burnt ground.

Finally, there is there is the coastal area of Terence Bay to Bar Harbour. It's a marvellous place to hike, and includes Pennant Point and Peggy's Cove.

Maritimers have traditionally used publicly owned and private land for hunting and fishing; cutting wood; canoeing; hiking and camping; studying animals, plants, and rocks; and just for enjoyment — for example, beach days. These pursuits have changed over time, from emphasising those which help support families to those undertaken for pure recreation. The latter support a new outdoor industry but also increase access for destructive uses which can quickly overwhelm natural features.

Oliver told us the intention is to plan ahead, to protect some deep wilderness for limited access with canoes and hiking only, which put little pressure on the environment, and to enhance other places, such as Lawrencetown Beach, for family picnics and beach sports.

During this autumn, the Municipality will be holding public meetings to discuss the degree of development of these places, combining stewardship of the environment with public access. Oliver urged us to make full use of these opportunities to express our opinions and state what we want done.



HFN has worked in the past for restricted access to the protected areas, which are designed to preserve the original environment and its plants and animals. Now we have to tackle the difficult part — explaining this concept to a population which does not accept restrictions readily, and generally sees wild land as something to be exploited. We must also be practical in a situation where there cannot be adequate policing, and tolerant of traditional uses with which perhaps we do not agree.

We should remember that one responsible group asking for access to MacNabs Island intended to take mountain bikes, and were looking forward to making their own trails everywhere!

We local naturalists are a minority which could well be submerged in public debate. So we had better go to these meetings and make our personal opinions known, and contact our elected representatives, both municipal and provincial. The meetings are advertised in daily papers and on radio, with contact phone numbers.

Protecting Sites Used by School Classes

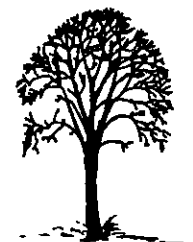
Rita Cook has known the coast from Indian Harbour to East Dover for most of her life. Although it has been a protected area since 1969, she says there are fewer plant species there now than there were then, and many of them only occur in small scattered patches. There is also a prominent ATV trail along most of that coastal strip now.

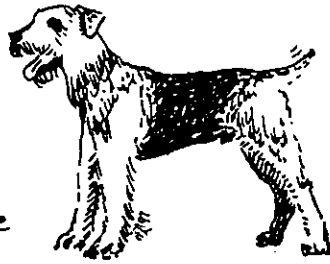
Rita was at Polly's Cove recently, and encountered a large school class on a field trip with their science teacher. Each student had a plastic grocery bag into which one specimen of every plant species was being collected, for examination back at the school. Apparently, this teacher brings at least one class to Polly's Cove every year, and others do the same.

This is quite enough pressure, over a number of years, to devastate the coastal flora and change the natural environment completely. The same will apply to other habitats visited annually by large classes.

Rita asks HFN, FNSN, and Wild Flora members to undertake some education of the educators; to point out that the plants in these places are protected, and to promote the need for fewer visits and very conservative collecting if any. Students should know not only what they are seeing, but also how to protect it.

— Ursula Grigg





Airedale

PESTICIDE DEATH, A PERSONAL NOTE

Late afternoon, on a sunny breezy day during the first week of July this year, I was out walking with Sam, my pet terrier, when I became aware of a man spraying the lawn of the property we were passing. He was spraying from about hip level, as when hand-watering a garden, using a high-powered hose attached to a truck parked on the road. My immediate thought was that he was spraying water, and it wasn't until we had passed the truck that I realised he was spraying a chemical. The chemical, I discovered later, was Killlex. Sixty hours later, Sam was dead!

That same morning, Sam had received his monthly testosterone shot for his leaky bladder, and as well, his second Sentinel medication, which he had begun the previous month, in early June; this is the drug now recommended for the prevention of heart-worm in dogs. As he also suffered from hypothyroidism, he had been on a daily dose of Synthroid for the past six or seven years.

Although 11 years old, Sam was a very active small dog, weighing about 20 pounds. Always ready for outings, he expected his walks every day, winter and summer, and would jump and play every day as well.

The first indication that something was wrong occurred on the morning after we encountered the chemical spray, when Sam stumbled on two separate occasions when going down steps and then fell over while trying to urinate. He was taken immediately to his veterinarian, where he was examined, medicated, and taken home.

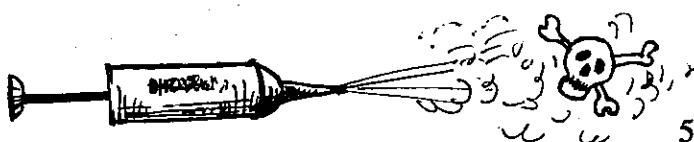
His condition worsened during that day and night; he became unable to stand, developing breathing difficulties, congestion, and anoxia. He was admitted to the veterinary hospital the following day, and put on life-support. Despite heroic intervention by his veterinarian, he did not respond to treatment and was euthanised in the early hours of the following morning.

I am still waiting for the autopsy results, and I understand that tissue samples have been sent to the U. S. for further testing.

According to Dr. June Irwin M.D., a dermatologist — "Pesticides — herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides — and fertiliser sprays contain poisonous solvents. These solvents are trade secret. Information available to the industry and to the government on the adverse health effects of these products is not distributed to the public, nor have health and safety data sheets been released."

(From — Pesticides: are they silent killers? by Dr. June Irwin, 1991)

— Connie Eaton



GREEN SPACES IN URBAN PLACES

In June, HFN hosted the eighth annual general meeting of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists at a weekend gathering at Mount Saint Vincent University. Despite the torrential rains that greeted us on our opening day, Friday 13 June, the skies cleared overnight and all eighteen of the field trips went ahead under progressively more clear and sunny skies. The highlight of the weekend was the boat trip to McNabs Island, where we offered five different field trips on Saturday afternoon. A full programme of speakers inspired and challenged us with their stories of protecting and restoring natural areas in Halifax. We got to know our fellow naturalists during the banquet and the barbecue, and saw interesting displays from environmental organisations. There will be field trip reports and accounts of the lectures in the forthcoming issue of the FNSN newsletter.

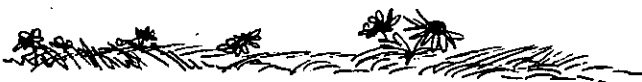
The weekend was attended by about 60 people, which is markedly fewer than the usual attendance at FNSN conferences. It seems that FNSN members from other parts of the province don't see Halifax as a "destination" for naturalists, and don't expect to see anything unusual here. But everyone who did come, whom I spoke to, or who filled out evaluation forms, reported that they had enjoyed the weekend immensely, had been surprised by how much we had to show off here, and went away impressed by the natural parks and resources in our area. This is the message that we worked hard to bring to people. I am particularly disappointed that more HFN members did not support our efforts by attending. It was a great weekend, and even for those of us who think we know our area well, there was bound to be something new. In fact, when planning the programme, I included field trips to four places which I myself had never visited, and there were several speakers whom I had not personally heard before.

I would like to thank all of the speakers and field trip leaders whose names are in the programme, as well as Beth McClelland, Bob McDonald, and Colin Stewart, who also led field trips which were not finalised until after the programme was printed. My thanks are due to the HFN members who worked hard to organise the conference: Bob and Wendy McDonald, who looked after the displays; Shirley McIntyre, who together with Wendy handled local arrangements; Ursula Grigg, who planned the programme with me; Beth McClelland, who prepared maps and directions; Stephanie Robertson, who edited and designed all of our materials; Linda Payzant, who was conference registrar; Greg Crosby, our treasurer and legal advisor; and Peter Payzant, who helped with a multitude of things. Finally, I would like to thank the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, who generously sponsored our expedition to McNabs Island.

— Patricia L. Chalmers, Chair
FNSN AGM '97 Planning Committee



SPECIAL ARTICLES



“GET YOUR LAWN OFF DRUGS...”

...12 easy steps to practice chemical-free gardening.”

(In our last issue, we published extensive information regarding the use of garden chemicals and their effects on animals, children, and people. This following information was misplaced at that time, and is being included in here.)

Weed & Feed Mixtures

The most popular lawn-care products contain 2,4-D, a major component of Agent Orange... the defoliant used in Vietnam.

For Your Children's sake!

Children living in homes where house and garden pesticides are used have up to nine times greater chance of developing childhood leukaemia, according to the National Cancer Institute. Childhood cancers linked to pesticide exposure are increasing and include: neuroblastoma, colorectal cancer, brain cancer, acute lymphocytic leukaemia, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

For Your Sake!

We've only just begun to realize that exposure to toxic agents early in life may be a factor in old-age related diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. Adult non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma, leukaemia, and breast, testicular, liver, stomach, pancreatic, and brain cancers also have been linked to pesticides and pest strip usage.

For Your Lawn's Sake!

Most synthetic chemical fertilizers release nutrients too quickly, get leached away, acidify the soil and burn the lawn. Chemicals kill earthworms and soil microbes that are the essence of healthy soil, and that is a gardening crime! Eventually, a chemically treated lawn gets little nutrition from such barren soil. It becomes drug dependent!

For the Birds!

Many lawn and garden pesticides are toxic to a wide variety of birds and beneficial insects.

Diazinon, a common insecticide, has been proven to kill large numbers of birds.

— from the **Chemical-Free Lawn Project**
by **Melanie Briand and Joanne Taylor**



FIELD TRIPS

CAPE SPLIT — HERE WE COME AGAIN!!

DATE: Saturday, May 24

PLACE: Cape Split, Nova Scotia

WEATHER: Sunny and warm

INTERPRETER: Lesley Butters

PARTICIPANTS: 11

“A PERFECT DAY!” — that's how many of the participants described their trip after exploring Cape Split near Canning, Nova Scotia with the learned Leslie Butters guiding the way.

The eleven of us, seven members and four non-members, were content with our surroundings as we avoided the first quarter mile of mud by taking to the woods. We had had a decision to make that day because there were two trips planned by our Society for this same date. Some felt sad to miss the other trip, and wished that they could have attended both. In any regard, the day was perfect for walking, the air was fresh and warm, and — there were no black flies or mosquitoes! We stopped to examine Early Meadow Rue and False Solomon's Seal along with several different ferns including Christmas Fern and Ostrich Fern. Early Meadow Rue belongs to the buttercup family and is an early species as its name implies. It has drooping flowers, with 4 to 5 sepals that are greenish-white or



TRILLIUM



purple-tipped. False Solomon's Seal has oval, pointed, leaves that alternate along the reclining stem. When the flowers are out they are a spirea-like cluster of creamy-white.

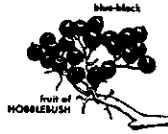
We were not long on the trail when we rounded a bend in the path and came upon a magnificent display of Spring Beauty that blanketed the hillsides for as far as we could see. This plant stands from 6 to 12 inches tall, has five regular shaped petals of white or pink with darker pink veins, and a pair of smooth linear leaves part way up the stem.

The Red Trillium, which belongs to the Lily family, although not up to the Spring Beauty's numbers, were not to be outdone by them. The Trilliums, which consist of three petals, three sepals, and three leaves, were showy — with their red faces held up to the wonderful warm sunny day. Also present was an occasional Nodding Trillium. These nodding plants have a white flower that is smaller than the red. It receives its name from the fact that the flower dangles underneath the leaves. As we trekked along — happily finding plants that were not yet in flower such as Sarsaparilla, which belongs to the Ginseng family, and Dogbane — we stopped to catch a look at a Black-Capped Chickadee, which has a black cap and

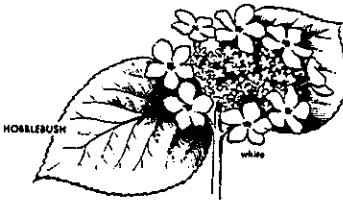




Dutchman's-breeches
Dicentra Cucullaria



fruit of
HOBBLEBUSH



HOBBLEBUSH



typical WILD-RAISIN

throat, and white cheeks and underpants with a gray back; and a Red-Breasted Nuthatch that is the size of a sparrow with a blue-gray upper body and pale rust underneath. Fluttering nearby and darting about the trees was the Yellow-Rumped Warbler that is very impressive with its bluish back, black breast and flanks, and a lovely, yellow rump. We heard the call of the Blue Jay, — 'jay, jay' — that sometimes changed to 'queedle, queedle', and the Raven, croaking 'wonk, wonk'.

Resplendent with different shades of white with yellow tips, the flowers of the Poppy family's Dutchman's Breeches hung from curved stems like tiny pantaloons, ankles-up, hung out to dry. The leaves on this plant are dissected, an attractive light green, and are easy to spot, even if the flowers had not yet been in bloom. These plants are on the protected list in New England where they almost disappeared.

Laced in with the forest floor were also several species of violets of the family *Violaceae*. The Early Blue, or Wood, Violet has 2 side-bearded petals, and the Downy Yellow has a downy stem and leaves which are heart-shaped. There are several hundred species of violets. All have that distinctive butterfly shape — two side petals are narrow; two upper petals are usually erect. Some have hairs or beards on the sides to keep out the rain and give insects a place to land.



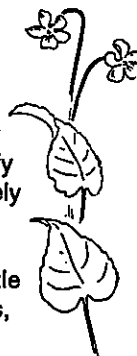
Just as we decided that we were famished and needed lunch, we arrived at the Split. It is truly a magnificent sight! The land falls away with a 200-foot drop (my estimate) only to begin again, some 20 feet away and out in the water. This other promontory appears to have been split off the main land mass by some force of nature. Minas Basin swirls and churns as the tides fall and rise to meet Parrsboro on the other side. Perched on this stack, appearing quite content, were Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, and Double-Crested Cormorants. The Black-backed Gull — slightly smaller than the Herring Gull — has a dark slate-gray back and wings with yellow legs. The Herring Gull has a lighter gray on its back and wings; however, it has a black wing tip with white spots. The cormorant is dark with an orange throat pouch.



We lunched on a nice grassy spot under some trees, where an American Robin and a Dark-Eyed Junco visiting nearby sang for us as they bounded from tree to tree. We walked along the cliffs, being careful of the sharp drop-off, then headed back toward Broad Cove where we planned to stop for a short time. Some of us carefully scaled down the very steep path to the beach, where we explored the rocks hoping to find a piece of amethyst overlooked by others. But it was not to be, on this day.



The 5-mile hike back to the car proceeded a lot faster than our trip in, because we no longer stopped to identify species. We now knew what we were seeing, and merely admired them as we walked past. We only stopped on the way out when someone would say something such as, "There's a Purple Finch", or to enjoy the sweet whistle and trill of the Sparrow. As we emerged from the woods, a graceful little bat swooped around and over us, very close by, back and forth, as if in a farewell wave bidding us to come again.



Downy Yellow

FOREST PICNIC & BEACH SWIM

DATE: July 12, 1997

PLACE: Southwest Lobe of Second Lake, Lower Sackville

WEATHER: Sunny and Warm

INTERPRETER: Walter Regan, Sackville Rivers Association

PARTICIPANTS: 7

From our point of departure below the rim of the ridge at the end of Metropolitan Avenue, it was hard to imagine that we were about to enter a natural area given the highest quality park classification by the Department of Natural Resources. We had just driven through First Lake Drive Subdivisions in order to leave two cars at the end of our intended walk. Walter oriented us with a map which showed Second Lake, comprised of three lobes separated by two peninsulas, lying just north and east of First Lake, which is surrounded by housing. We would explore only one side of one of the lobes and one peninsula.

Second Lake lies in its own secluded watershed, fed only by run off from surrounding drumlin hills. Before the Pockwock system was opened, Second Lake was a municipal water supply. We started over the ridge and down the fairly steep slope, cooled by westerly breezes as we neared the lake. The water was very clear. A couple of boys were fishing for bass near a patch of Arrowhead just off shore. The path followed the lake shore through Sweet Gale, Wild Raisin, Indian Pear, Meadowsweet, Hobblebush, and a variety of ferns, including large patches of Royal Fern. Walter lead us up the slope to see clusters of old growth forest. There is a great diversity of age, species, and structure here (remembering some of Jim Drescher's lessons from Windhorse Farm). A few of the Red Spruce, White Pine, Hemlock, and Yellow Birch approach 200 years in age. There were distinctive deep, rectangular carvings made by a Pileated Woodpecker, which prefers these habitats.

Walter explained that more subdivisions and a four lane highway may yet be built along this slope, despite efforts by the Second Lake Committee to convince the Highway and Housing Departments of the damage it would cause to the lake. The Committee, the latest in a succession of conservation efforts dating from the 60's, wants Park Reserve status for the 715 acres of crown land, which would eventually become metro's northern regional park and provide passive recreation for the area's 41,000 residents.

— Elizabeth Keizer

Returning to the lake shore path, we soon discovered a small cove and beach. The low bog behind it lead to the peninsula. Several of us made our way through thickets of Deciduous Holly to a Witch Hazel-layered path leading out to the peninsula. It was almost pristine, several campfire sites signifying others' appreciation. We returned for a swim before lunch and the water was warm, the prevailing onshore breeze explaining the natural deposit of sand within the cove. As we lunched, we noticed Indian Cucumber, Clintonia, and Sarsaparilla. A Bald Eagle passed overhead.

It was time to return. I paused to listen to faint, high pitched 'seet-seet's' and was rewarded with a visit from a pair of Blackburnian Warblers (the male still had his fire-throat this late in the season). Up the more gradual ascent, we passed through what was a farm, perhaps forty years ago. There were more, younger deciduous trees here — maples and ash; and calls of Peewee, Hermit Thrush, Oven Bird, and a Black and White Warbler imitating a Nuthatch were heard. Unexpectedly, we were out — on to a street — where a ball toss game was in progress as we reclaimed our parked cars and departed, wishing success to these people's efforts to secure a park here.

— Rich Peckham



TIDEPOOL TANGO

DATE: Saturday, 16 August, 1997

PLACE: Martinique Beach Provincial Park

WEATHER: Overcast and warm with a light breeze

LEADER: Cathy Fulton

PARTICIPANTS: 11 adults, 3 children (and other families who joined in later)

Martinique is best known for its miles-long white sand beaches, formed of ground-up granite. But some huge boulders remain to form an interesting feature on the western end of the beach, near the second parking lot. This rocky outcropping is covered at high tide, but at low tide many pools are formed in the crevices of the rock. Some creatures spend their lives in these tide-pools, and as the waters recede, other plants and animals are trapped in the tide-pools for temporary visits as well.

We were introduced to the life in these pools by Cathy Fulton, who led us over the slippery rocks which were covered with wet piles of shifting rockweed and wrack. Semi-palmated plovers scattered before us on the beach, and small flocks of female Common Eiders loafed on the waters. Cathy pointed out to us the three zones of a seashore; the diversity and concentration of life increases as we approach the water.

Suitably clothed in shorts and rubber boots, Cathy waded into the tide-pools and showed us how much was going on under the drab heaps of seaweed, which provide

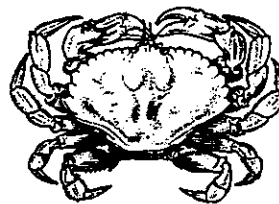
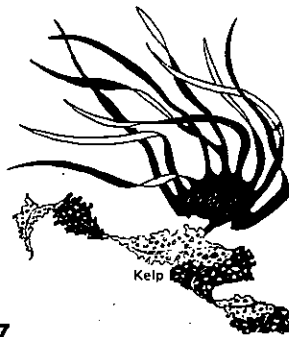
both food and shelter to many species. She identified several of the brown marine algae that grow in the middle zone of the shoreline, including wrack (*Fucus sp.*), with its pairs of air bladders, and Rockweed (*Ascophyllum*), with single bladders. The rocks were also covered with barnacles and Periwinkles; we learned to distinguish the two, which are often confused.

The shore's lowest zone, under water except at low tide, is home to red and green marine algae, such as Irish Moss and Dulse, as well as the brown kelps. Using plastic pails and dippers, Cathy showed us some of the livelier species in the pools — our common Rock Crab, and also the Green Crab, which is a southerly species. With considerable daring and dexterity, Cathy taught us how to pick up a crab (with palm over the carapace, and fingers wedged behind its claws, forcing them forward) and turn it over to determine its sex. One of the children triumphantly produced a hermit crab which she had discovered living in a whelk shell. After this find, children scattered eagerly among the rocks and retrieved other treasures for Cathy to tell us about — sea stars, sea urchins, Horse Mussels, limpets, and finally, a soft jelly-like sea anemone. For all of these, Cathy was able to tell us something interesting about their lives, and how they fit into the ecology of the tide-pool.

While eating lunch afterwards, Carol Klar and I studied the shorebirds on the mudflats behind the barrier beach. We watched Semi-palmated Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitchers, and Great Blue Herons. I also found one of our smaller orchids, the dainty Slender Ladies Tresses which has small greenish-white blossoms arranged in a spiral on a thin spike, growing in dry sandy soil with Knapweed, Spotted Alders, and Bayberry. On our way home we noticed that Cranberries were abundant in the bogs, though the bogs showed signs of drought; and we found lots of Blue Toadflax in bloom along the roadside near Three Fathom Harbour.

Thank you, Cathy, for a lovely day exploring nature on the Eastern Shore.

— Patricia L. Chalmers



ROCK CRAB *Cancer irroratus*



GREEN CRAB *Carcinus maenas*



HERMIT CRAB



ALMANAC

This almanac is for the dates of events which are not found in our programme: 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.

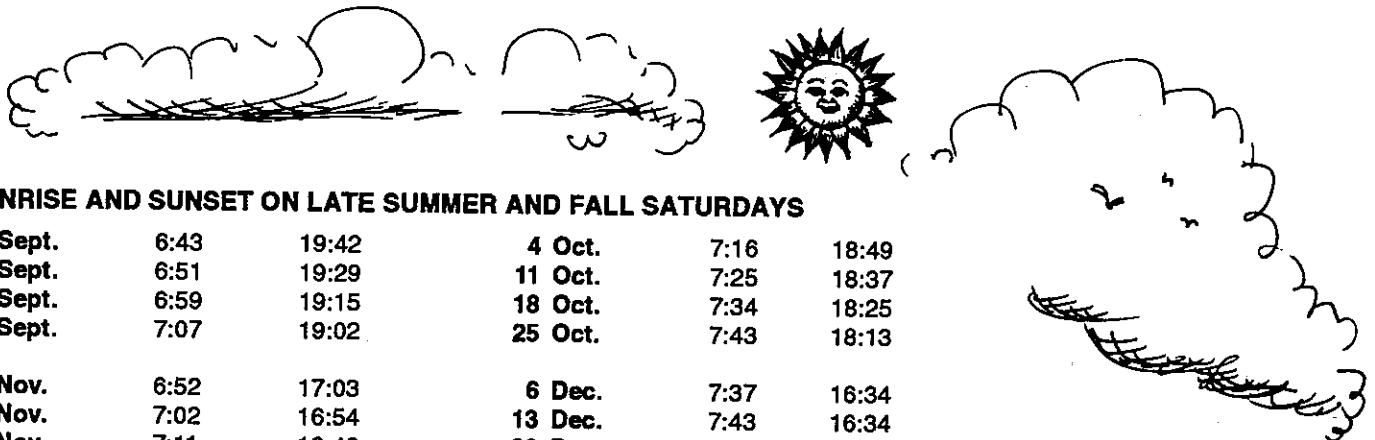
"Except on the beaches and tidal flats, where shorebirds pause in their thousands to feed, and on wet marshes and river bottoms, where geese gather under the wistful eye of the gunner, the autumn migration of the birds is far less spectacular than their explosive arrival in spring. As September advanced, we found that the migration had been going on for a long while, unnoticed. Then one morning we woke to realize that the woods had fallen silent. The chorus that had greeted the first rising of the light for the past five months would be heard no more for the next seven."

Harold Horwood, The Foxes of Beachy Cove (1967)

NATURAL EVENTS

- 16 Sept.** Full moon — this is the 'Harvest Moon'
- mid-Sept./mid-Oct.** Rough-legged Hawks arrive in the Valley from their northern breeding grounds and stay the winter
- 22 Sept.** Autumnal Equinox at 7:57 p.m. ADT: Fall begins
- 30 Sept.** Average date for first frost in Halifax (i.e., Environment Canada says that there is only a one in ten chance that we will have frost before this date). Look forward to 210 days of frosty weather
- late Sept./Oct.** Shaggy-mane mushrooms, *Coprinus sp.*, are abundant
- early-mid Oct.** Our native witchhazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*, blooms — the last bloom of the season
- 15 Oct.** Full Moon — this is the 'Hunters' Moon'
- 18 Oct.** Snow Buntings begin to arrive
- 21/22 Oct.** Orionid Meteor Shower
- 22 Oct.** Our provincial bird, the Osprey, leaves 
- 26 Oct.** Venus and Mars close together in western sky after sunset
- 26 Oct.** Return to Standard Time: turn clocks back one hour
- 14 Nov.** Full moon — this is the 'Beaver Moon'
- 17/18 Nov.** Leonid Meteor Shower
- 22 Nov.** daily minimum temperature at Shearwater goes below 0°
- 26 Nov.** Venus near Mars in the evening sky
- 7 Dec.** Daily average temperature at Shearwater goes below 0°
- 13 Dec.** Full moon — this is the 'Cold Moon' 
- 13/14 Dec.** Geminid Meteor Shower: the biggest of the season
- 21 Dec.** Winter Solstice at 4:09 AST: winter begins
- 24/25 Dec.** Annual nocturnal circumglobal migration of Arctic Reindeer
- 31 Dec.** Venus, Mars, Jupiter and waxing crescent Moon in west just after sunset
- 7 Jan.** Daily maximum temperature at Shearwater goes below 0°

Sources — Atmospheric Environment Service, Climatic Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.; Colombo's Canadian Global Almanac, 1997; Tufts' Birds of Nova Scotia, 1986; the personal observations of the compiler.



SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON LATE SUMMER AND FALL SATURDAYS

6 Sept.	6:43	19:42	4 Oct.	7:16	18:49
13 Sept.	6:51	19:29	11 Oct.	7:25	18:37
20 Sept.	6:59	19:15	18 Oct.	7:34	18:25
27 Sept.	7:07	19:02	25 Oct.	7:43	18:13
1 Nov.	6:52	17:03	6 Dec.	7:37	16:34
8 Nov.	7:02	16:54	13 Dec.	7:43	16:34
15 Nov.	7:11	16:46	20 Dec.	7:48	16:36
22 Nov.	7:20	16:40	27 Dec.	7:51	16:40
29 Nov.	7:29	16:36			

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

ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

Blomidon Naturalists Society — Meets on 3rd Mon. of the month, Room 241, Beveridge Arts Centre, Acadia, 7:30 p.m. Field trips usually depart the Robie Tufts Nature Centre, Front St., Wolfville. For more info — <http://ace.acadiau.ca/bns/home.htm>

- 27 Sept. "Mushroom Walk", with leader Twila Robar-DeCoste. Meet at 9 a.m.
- 12 Oct. "Pond Life", with leader Jim Wolford. Meet at 1:30 p.m.
- 20 Oct. "What to do with Sable Island", with speaker Tony Lock.
- 4 Nov. "Tour the November Sky", with leader Sherman Williams. Phone 542-5104.
- 17 Nov. "Update on Orchids and Owls", with speaker Bernard Forsythe.
- 8 Dec. "Soaring with Eagles", with speaker Larry Bogan.
- 19 Jan. "Birding in Manitoba", with speaker Richard Stern.



Burke-Gaffney Observatory — Public shows at SMU's Burke-Gaffney Observatory are on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of every month. Phone 496-8257.

Dartmouth Volksmarch Club — Meets for organised walks, at least 10K, every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Their schedule is at the Trail Shop on Quinpool Road. For more info phone 435-5252.

Friends of McNabs Island — For more info call Dusan Soudek, 422-1045; or Mike Tilley, 465-4563.

28 September 14th annual Fall Beach Sweep departs Cable Wharf 10:00 a.m. No charge for volunteers. Rain date: 5 Oct.

19 October Fall Foliage Foray — Departs Cable Wharf, time/price to be announced. Rain date: 26 October.

Halifax Outdoor Club — Meets weekly at Bagel Works, Quinpool Rd., for carpooling. Call the 'Hotline', 492-5450 for details.

Mainland South Heritage Society — Meets last Thurs. of the month, Captain William Spry Centre, Spryfield, 7:30 p.m. There are weekend outings in the summer and fall. Phone the Captain William Spry Library, 490-5734, for more info.

Nova Scotia Bird Society — Meets on the 4th Thurs. of the month, Sept. to April, at the NSMNH, 8 p.m. For more info, phone 852-2428 or <http://cfn.cs.dal.ca/Recreation/NS-BirdSoc/nsbsmain.html>

- 4 Oct. Hartlen's Point, with leader Peter Macleod, 852-1228.
- 11-13 Oct. Briar Island, with leader Fulton Lavender, 455-4966.
- 23 Oct. Annual General Meeting
- 29 Nov. Hartlen's Point, with leader Fulton Lavender, 455-4966.
- mid/end Dec. Join in a Christmas Bird Count. Phone Fulton Lavender or the N.S.B.S. Bird Information Line for info.

Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society — Meets at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 7 p.m. For more info phone 424-7490.

- 22 Oct. "Isle Haute: The Mysterious Meeting Place"; speaker Dan Conlin, NSMNH. Phone 424-6099, or 424-7353.
- Sept.-Oct. "Foliage Photos", a display by photographer Stephen Patterson.
- 1 Oct. "Focus on Leaves", a photography workshop with Stephen Patterson. 7:30 p.m.
- 18 Oct. "Fall Colours Walk"; Alex Wilson. Meet at Provincial Picnic Park, Mount Uniacke, 10 a.m. Phone 424-3563.
- 26 Oct. "Stories from Sable Island"; speaker Zoe Lucas, 2 p.m.
- 2 Nov. "... Things You Cannot Bring Home"; speaker Les Sampson, Enforcement Coordinator for Wildlife Trade, 2 p.m.
- 5 Nov. "Migrate, Hibernate, or Tolerate... What Animals Do in Winter"; speaker Keith Jensen, 7 p.m.
- 19 Nov. "Corals off Nova Scotia?"; with speakers Mark Butler, Heather Breeze, and Sanford Atwood., 7:30 p.m.

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society — Meets 4th Mon. of the month, Sept. to April, at the NSMNH, 7:30 p.m. For more info phone Shirley McIntyre, 835-3673, or <http://fcast.navnet.net/~csensen>

- 20 Sept. "Ferns and Mosses at Kentville Ravine", with leader John Pickwell, NSMNH, 9 a.m.
- 22 Sept. "Wild Orchids of Nova Scotia", with speaker Bernard Forsythe.
- 18 Oct. "Tree Identification Tour", leader Cathy Melner, DNR Forest Nursery, Mid. Musquodoboit. NSMNH, 8:30 a.m.
- 27 Oct. "Wild Flora of Newfoundland", with speaker Gini Proulx.
- 24 Nov. "Nova Scotia's Poisonous Plants", with speaker Glen Sampson.

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

18-19 Oct. Fall Show and Sale at the NSMNH.

Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia — Meets 2nd Mon. as well as 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, at the NSMNH, 7:30 p.m. Special events are held at SMU, Theatre A, Burke Education Centre. Watch for more info on the Fall Show; phone Gilbert van Ryckevorsel, 463-2695, or <http://chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/PNGS/PNGS.html>.

22 Nov. Fall Show, Burke Education Centre, St. Mary's University, 8 p.m.

Regional Museum of Cultural History (formerly Dartmouth Heritage Museum), 100 Wyse Rd., Dart. Phone 464-2300.
to 26 Oct. "Paddles in Time", the long history of canoeing and kayaking in Nova Scotia.

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax Chapter) — Meets 3rd Fri. of each month (except July and Aug.) at the NSMNH, 8:00 p.m. For more info, <http://apwww.stmarys.ca/rasc/>. Public shows are at 7 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at the Planetarium, Sir James Dunn Bldg., Dal. Shows resume 11 Sept. (none on 25 Dec.). For more info phone the NSMNH, 424-6099, or 424-7353.

— compiled by Patricia L. Chalmers

! NEXT DEADLINE !

5 NOVEMBER FOR DECEMBER ISSUE

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

Please phone 455-8160 to alert the editor

HUNTING SEASON!

A note on the hunting seasons in the Halifax region...

The **Black Bear season** is from 8 September to 25 October, and from then — through the **bow-hunters' Deer season** (27 Sept. - 30 Oct.), the **Ring-necked Pheasant season** (1 Oct.- 15 Dec.), the **Ruffed Grouse and other small game season** (1 Oct.- 31 Dec.), the **Duck season** (8 Oct. - 31 Dec.), the **Geese season** (8 Oct. - 15 Jan.), the **regular Deer season** (31 Oct.- 6 Dec.), the **Rabbit season** (15 Nov. - 15 Feb.), and the **second bow-hunters' Deer season** (8 Dec. - 13 Dec.) — **there are hunters abroad!**

REMEMBER, IT'S HUNTING SEASON, SO DRESS TO BE SEEN IN THE WOODS!

NATURE NOTES

Summer notes

These observations are mostly from members at the meeting on **4 September**. Peter and Linda Payzant went whale-watching off Brier Island, and saw **Northern Right Whales** doing nothing much, and a **South Polar Skua** robbing a Great Black-backed Gull. Mary Primrose reported that whale-watching tours can be taken from Peggy's Cove; she saw **Right Whales**, and thought them exciting. From a current news item, concerning biologists who are trying to free a young male Right Whale from fishing gear caught in his baleen, these creatures are far from dull. This guy is incredibly strong and is angry and vengeful.

Fall Notes

15 September — A young **female Right Whale** was found dead in the Bay of Fundy in July. Autopsy showed she had been hit by a ship. Pat Chalmers and Ursula Grigg went to Long Pond in Spryfield to listen for **Whippoorwills**, heard them and saw one flying along the pond at dusk, in late June. Helen Lofgren found a **Ring-necked Snake** dead in her yard in Jollimore; she believes snakes live there because she does not garden with chemicals. Regina Maass saw a very small **Shrew** on Brier Island, and **Fringed Gentians** in Newfoundland. Oliver Maass looked over a cliff at Cape Chignecto and saw three **Harbour Seals** on a sandbar at half tide, each with a pup. One pup was dead, and its mother restless. A little later the sandbar was under water and the seals were gone. Apparently the seals had been able to co-ordinate the births with a stage of the tide when they could be delivered safely on land. Pat Chalmers went to Bon Portage in mid-August and found that the flowers there were blooming 6-8 weeks late, presumably because of the cold spring and dry June. Doug Linzey reported that Sobey's were selling **Sturgeon** steaks at their Windsor St. store; the fish was caught locally. Peter and Linda Payzant were watching seabirds on a stack off Cape Split and saw **Cormorants** being blown off course by strong winds, which set them off the stack just as they were braking for landing on their nests!