

# THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST



No. 160  
September to November, 2015



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



**HFN** is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and holds Registered Charity status with the Canada Revenue Agency. Tax-creditable receipts will be issued for individual and corporate gifts. **HFN** is an affiliate of Nature Canada and an organisational member of Nature Nova Scotia, the provincial umbrella association for naturalist groups. **Objectives** are 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, and 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 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax; they are open to the public. **Field Trips** are held at least once a month; it is appreciated if those travelling in someone else's car share the cost of the gas. **Participants** in HFN activities are responsible for their own safety. Everyone, member or not, is welcome to take part in field trips. **Memberships** are open to anyone interested in the natural history of Nova Scotia. Forms are available at any meeting of the society, or by writing to: Membership Secretary, Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History. Members receive **The Halifax Field Naturalist**, along with its included **Programme**, quarterly. Our membership year is from January 1st to December 31st, and new memberships received from September 1st to December 31st of any year are valid until the end of the following membership year.



#### HFN ADDRESS

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Enter **Halifax Field Naturalists** or **HFN**.

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<b>Programme</b>	Vacant .....	

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#### YNC Rep.

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	Doug Linzey .....	582-7176
	David Patriquin .....	423-5716

#### FEES

<b>2015</b>	
<b>Student</b>	\$15.00 per year
<b>Individual</b>	\$20.00 per year
<b>Family</b>	\$25.00 per year
<b>Supporting</b>	\$30.00 per year
<b>Institutional</b>	\$30.00 per year
<b>NNS (opt.)</b>	\$5.00 per year

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**GRAPHICS** All uncredited illustrations are by H. Derbyshire or from copyright-free sources. **Front Cover** - Park's Falls, Pictou Co., Judy Keating; **p. 15** - Black-necked Crane, White-bellied Heron, Ibisbill, J. L. Moores; **Back Cover** - Point Pleasant Park spider webs, Rebecca Robertson; **Tide Table** - Canadian Hydrographic Service, Fisheries & Oceans Canada.

# HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## HFN MEMBERS' ART EXHIBIT

Our successful, four-month HFN Members' Art Exhibit at the Museum of Natural History (NSMNH) wound up on September 27th, giving wonderful exposure to HFN for its 40th Anniversary. It generated much interest in other groups who would also like to have member art exhibits, and this has excited NSMNH Curator of Marketing and Communications Jeffrey Gray, who is looking forward to hosting some more in the future. Already, he has booked 2025 for HFN's 50th and another HFN Members' Art Exhibit!

A sincere thank you to the NSMNH from the HFN's 40th Anniversary Committee for hosting this first-time HFN Members' Art Exhibit.



## WHAT IS A NATURALIST?

In the NaturallyNS column for August 2015, David Patriquin discusses what's involved in 'natural history' and how one becomes a 'naturalist'. The role of groups such as HFN is highlighted. Today, in our highly urbanised society and with the prevalence of industrial-scale forestry and farming, many such connections to nature have been lost. However, the yearning to know more about nature persists, especially throughout childhood. Paul Keddy, who was a young graduate student when he played a key role in founding the Halifax Field Naturalists many years ago, said, "If you want to learn more about your world, then you are a naturalist." (See p. 5 for the full article - ed.).



## 2015 NS NATURE TRUST DINNER

On Thursday, October 22nd at 5:30 p.m., join the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and renowned nature photographer and visual storyteller Len Wagg for its 18th Annual Dinner and Auction at the Cunard Centre in Halifax. Help us celebrate this year's land conservation successes, network with like-minded friends, and help raise critical funds for the Nature Trust's continued work saving the most unique and outstanding places across Nova Scotia. This will be a celebration of twenty one years of conservation successes displayed in gorgeous photography, stories, and more, with an amazing showcase of natural landscapes from Nova Scotia nature photographer Len Wagg. Once again Nancy Regan will grace the stage as our delightful MC for the evening. There is free parking on site, and the doors open and the Silent Auction begins at 5:30 p.m.; appetizers will



passed around at 5:45 p.m., dinner will be served at 6:45 p.m. There will be the usual Silent Auction, and a Raffle, with many amazing prizes to be won, including unique experience packages! For more information or to purchase tickets, please call 902-425-5263.



## JOIN 'OPEN FOREST DAY'

October 24th at Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area is Open Forest Day. Plan to attend between 1:00 am to 3:00 p.m. Over 30 groups will host displays and activities, including a walk in the woods to demonstrate our special Nova Scotia habitat – the forest. There will be talks offered by local experts as well.

Hosted by DNR and others, watch for more details in local papers. This event is suitable for families.



## AUTUMN 2015 ALMANAC

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Almanac will not be forthcoming for this issue. It will return in the Winter 2015 Issue, #160.



## BRINGING ADAPTATION HOME

Halifax residents are invited to participate in the study titled "Bringing adaptation home: Household engagement with climate change, municipal policy, and urban natures". Survey responses and participation in a focus group in the spring will contribute to a PhD-level study that is being administered through Carleton University's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies.

Halifax and Ottawa are the study cities.

If you are interested about the study, please contact Magda Goemans, [magdalene.goemans@carleton.ca](mailto:magdalene.goemans@carleton.ca).



## ERRATA

In the last issue, Summer 2015, #159, it was mistakenly stated that Shirley McIntyre's "Part II, The Second Five Years" of HFN's Fourth Decade had been finished. On the contrary, there is more, and it continues on p. 6.



## NEW & RETURNING

New - David Baldwin  
Returning - Debra Burleson  
New - Susan Nasser

# SPECIAL ARTICLES

## MORAR NATURE NOTES

– Gareth Harding

### MOONLIT NIGHT

May 30th, 2015 – my Jack Russell terrier Mildred and I came out of our farmhouse for a ‘last call’ into a mild, fragrant moonlit night, after having fallen asleep reading and semi-listening to Randy Bachman’s CBC Saturday night show. While I was staring down the neighbour’s meadow and brushing my teeth, Millie wandered off towards the well. Millie’s boldness was not usual as she keeps pretty close to me after dark.

I set out to see what was so interesting for her. The brilliant moonlight turned all the open spaces between the lilacs and garden fence into an enchanting twilight zone. There on the lawn, between the fence and the unkempt field was my little white and brown-patched Jack Russell leaping and pouncing this way and that, much like a fox. I couldn’t see what she was chasing so enthusiastically but every now and again I heard a loud crack followed by crunching and the satisfied liquid sound of smacking lips. I ran to the house to get a flash-light since the quarry was not visible to me.

On my return, I found that the air above the lawn was alive with big black June bugs bumbling in the torchlight! Putting two and two together, I realised firstly – why the lawn has been so extensively pockmarked in the late autumn by some hungry beast and secondly, – why my garden has been so free of cutworms since its first troublesome years. Up to now, June bugs were simply the buzzing beetle bombs around the porch light and the repetitive nighttime banging on the fly screens in spring.

### SWALLOWS OVER MORAR (Addendum)

July 26, 2015 – I was premature in my account of the natural history of our Tree Swallows in the previous issue of the Halifax Field Naturalist. This year we had two Bluebird boxes occupied. Furthermore, we were fortunate to be present during most of the fledging period this year.

The first-fledged was in the air by July 6th, and fledging continued to occur up to July 15th. I was also over-hasty in my previous write-up when I stated that the parents don’t feed their young in the air – I was wrong, they do! I even observed one parent dive down on one dithering youngster ensconced on a power line in order to startle it into the air! The parent then feed this same youngster well down the meadow while airborne (I assume this is to get their young feeding on their own as quickly as possible). However, I remain convinced that the learning period is very short, judging from the sheer number of observations of youngsters feeding on their own. The airways over our fields were busy with young swallows for a week, while adults were still feeding the remaining young in both nest boxes; the whole process was completed by July 17th, with all the young in the air. The box near the strawberry patch was empty two days before the meadow box. As in previous years, both

families vanished within days of the last young fledged. I was pleased to see empty boxes this year indicating that both clutches were successfully fledged. There are up to eight new Tree Swallows out there but heaven knows where they disappeared to in such a hurry!

It was also great news for other aerial flycatchers – the Bank Swallow colony in Morar being the largest I’ve seen in years, in spite of the almost complete destruction of their nesting cavities by winter storms over the Gulf this past winter. At one point, June 24th, the entire newly-arrived colony took to the sky and I could estimate abundance at greater than 35 and perhaps as many as 50 pairs. This living cloud soon disintegrated into individual pairs and dispersed over the ocean – quite the spectacle!



## HFN’S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

The following are replies from Paul Keddy and Joe Harvey to invitations from HFN’s 40th Anniversary Committee to attend the October meeting and celebration of our 40th anniversary.

### From Joe Harvey, September 8th:

“Grace,

The notice of the 40th anniversary meeting of the HFN got me reminiscing about my experience in Halifax.

I emigrated to Nova Scotia 8 September 1963 to join the faculty of Dalhousie University and set up classes in plant and field studies. A single plane ride (my first), Heathrow to Halifax had taken me from the almost entirely man-made landscapes of Europe to what, on first sighting, seemed the endless, pristine landscape (it wasn’t of course) of Nova Scotia. Here was a model for what the British Isles must have looked like thousands of years ago. To a biologist the possibilities were endless.

I urgently needed an introduction to the biology of the landscape. The previous occupant of the post, Ken Greenwich, a forester, had already left so there was no one to give me an introduction to Nova Scotia.

The birdwatchers were very welcoming and came the closest to filling my needs. But their restricted mandate and the requirement to rise before 6:00 a.m. didn’t satisfy my exploratory cravings.

There were fewer than ten members in what became the biology department, none were into field work. So I bought a VW Beetle and had time to drive round the northern part of the province before classes started towards the end of October. At the time, the first (short) term started late to allow the potatoes to be picked.

During my years in Britain I had been an active member of, among others, the Northumbria Natural History Society, founded in 1829 as an offshoot of the Philo-





sophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne 1793. I have to admit that I was surprised that there was no equivalent in Halifax.

It was not that people stayed indoors: I was warned to be careful in the woods and wear red during the deer hunting season. And talking of red I was staggered at the scarlet fall leaves on the maples. In the UK leaves more or less rot on the trees without colour except, occasionally, a little yellow. The Cape Breton Highlands I visited as often as possible, the road had just been finally asphalted. Colleagues bragged that they had done it when it was gravel. I did not have the real experience. I do not regret that, although later, when I got to St. Anthony on the dirt road after Deer Lake, I burst three tires.

I found the biology department immensely liberating. Had I been recruited into a British university I would most likely have been expected to continue classes the basis of which had been established years before. At Dalhousie there were no precedents, there was complete freedom to devise classes as I thought they should be, so one thing I made certain of was getting biology students outdoors.

Initially I had my ecology students doing vegetation surveys on Saturday mornings in the fall. Then there were occasional rambles to various regions on Sunday afternoons. Why Sunday afternoons, you ask? This was Halifax the Good. One was expected to attend church on Sunday morning, or allow others to do so. Stores were closed (and food stores closed Monday if they were open into Saturday afternoon); cinemas were closed and sports did not defile the Lord's Day.

It was a small place, Canada had 17 million population, turning 18 million around Christmas 1963 I remember. I never regretted leaving Britain. Those were the days, great fun!

I no longer travel long distances and regret that I shall not attend the meeting but congratulate the Halifax Field Naturalists on their 40th anniversary.

#### **From Paul Keddy, September 18th:**

"Thank you for the announcement [i.e. invitation to the October 1st and 4th HFN events]. It is inspiring to know that HFN is still active. We knew at the time that there was a need for such an organisation, but of course the first couple of years were a leap of faith.

I won't be able to make it to Nova Scotia this year. Chronic illness has slowed me down a great deal. But I will be there in spirit. And, if you consider it appropriate, here is a short greeting you could read at the meeting, or add to the newsletter, or both.

"Greetings from your first President. I am delighted to know that after 40 years you are still going strong. It has been more than a decade since I have been to Nova Scotia. But I have many fond memories, including Hemlock Ravine, Cape Split, Martinique Beach, Brier Island, and of course, the Tusket River.

Cathy and I now live in a fine tract of deciduous forest somewhat similar to the Cobequid Hills. Deciduous forest, except here we have more kinds of trees, including Burr Oak, Butternut, and Bitternut Hickory.

So, have yourselves a well-deserved 40th birthday

celebration. You are the people who keep HFN alive. Well done, one and all!"

Dr. Paul Keddy, [www.drpaulkeddy.com](http://www.drpaulkeddy.com). New Book: "Wetland Ecology: Principles and Conservation"; New Article: "Introductory Sources for Ecology".



## **BECOMING A NATURALIST**

*– David Patriquin*

Natural history is the observation and description of the life around us and the explanation of how it came to be. Naturalists are people who have some competency in natural history. A naturalist can name many species and say something about them and their habitats. Some are fairly focused on certain groups — birdwatchers on birds and fly fishers on fish and insects — but a naturalist can also say a lot about the habitats of those groups and about other species in those habitats.

Charles Darwin remains the preeminent naturalist, a keen observer and interpreter on local and global scales. His theory of natural selection remains a cornerstone of natural history and of all biological sciences. Geological descriptions and concepts are also very important. Competency in natural history has never been restricted to academics or other scientific professionals. Indeed, most naturalists today are not academics, or if they are, their specialty is often in an area like English or computer science. In general, university is a place to hone one's skills for studying natural history — for example, as a graduate student studying the population genetics of a threatened species — but developing a passion and basic skills for natural history commonly takes place outside academia.

An example is Bernard Forsythe, "The Owl Man of King's County." Forsythe was a mailman before retirement. "He is a good example", Jim Wolford of the Blomidon Naturalists Society told [KingsCountyNews.ca](http://KingsCountyNews.ca) in May 2013, "of how someone without formal credentials can take it upon himself to study a group of organisms, become an expert in that group, and contribute to science at the same time as promoting the biodiversity around us." Forsythe is also recognised as an authority on Nova Scotia orchids. Yes, Nova Scotia has orchids — 40 species.

So how does one learn natural history? It has often been an interest and skill set that was passed down between generations or, for example, might have been stimulated by a birdfeeder in the backyard and binoculars in the window, or developed by farmers and woodlot owners as they managed their lands.

Today, in our highly urbanised society, and with the prevalence of industrial-scale forestry and farming, many such connections have been lost. However, the yearning to know more about nature persists, especially through childhood. Paul Keddy, a young graduate

student when he played a key role in the founding of the Halifax Field Naturalists many years ago, said, "If you want to learn more about your world, then you are a naturalist."

In Nova Scotia, we are blessed with nature at our doorstep almost everywhere, and that's the place to start. Pick a favourite site or sites or favourite group of species (birds, wildflowers, insects), begin to observe them through the year and find out everything you can about them.

User-friendly guides, notably the Peterson Field Guide series and Audubon apps for mobile devices, can be used to identify species and geological structures. Digital photo records can be a big help, allowing one to have a second look after returning from the field, as well as providing formal documentation of observations. Once a species has been identified, the web provides access to many resources for finding out more.

One of the best ways to develop skills in natural history and to discover new places is to join a naturalist group such as the Halifax Field Naturalists, the Blomidon Naturalists Society, the Nova Scotia Bird Society, the Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society and, for youngsters, the Young Naturalists Club of Nova Scotia. Visit [wild-landns.ca](http://wild-landns.ca) for a comprehensive list. Typically, these groups meet indoors once a month through the fall, winter, and spring, with a presentation by an invited speaker, and hold field trips monthly or more frequently. The public is always welcome, so you don't have to join a group to test the waters. Don't fret about 'not knowing much', as most participants are in the same boat. They meet to share what they know and to learn from people they invite to give lectures and lead field trips. Several groups based in the Halifax area hold meetings at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History.

Nature Nova Scotia is a federation of naturalist groups that holds a popular annual weekend get-together in the late spring. The Young Naturalists Club participates, holding special sessions for youngsters thereby making it a popular venture for families. Nature Nova Scotia also sponsors an online discussion group that receives multiple postings of nature observations daily. Checking these postings which can be viewed publicly is a great way to keep tabs on seasonal nature sightings in Nova Scotia.

This year, the Halifax Field Naturalists (HFN) are celebrating their 40th anniversary. They will be hosting a public presentation, "The Once and Future Atlantic" by Harry Thurston, on October 1st at 7:30 p.m. at Ashburn Golf Club. Thurston authored *The Atlantic Coast, A Natural History*. It is beautifully illustrated with photographs by Wayne Barrett and sketches by Emily S. Damstra, and is a wonderful, compelling read. But be prepared; it could well send you running into the wilds, nature guide in hand!



## HFN'S FOURTH DECADE

– Shirley McIntyre

**WINTER 2013 – Issue # 149** Editor Stephanie Robertson outlined the editorial criteria for production of The Halifax Field Naturalist.

**Special Reports** – At a joint meeting with the N.S. Bird Society on September 27th, 2012, longtime birder Ian McLaren was presented with the prestigious Griscom award by the American Bird Association.

**Special Articles** – Clarence Stevens II shared his extensive knowledge about Nova Scotian avian fall migration, which extends from early July and continues to roughly mid-November.

**Talk Reports** – On the 4th of October our presentation was about **Climate Change** by Carl Duivenvoorden who was personally trained by Al Gore. He shared sobering information about exponential increases in global warming; the 'Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle' mantra is needed more than ever now. Carl writes a bi-weekly column at [info.changeyourcorner.com](http://info.changeyourcorner.com). On the 1st of November Karen McKendry of the Nova Scotia Trust (NSNT) presented **St. Mary's River, a River of Green**, an overview of the Trust's work to protect this important river. Its headwaters begin in three counties – Pictou, Antigonish, and Guysborough. The river is 250 km long and has four branches with 130 lakes feeding into it. Karen spoke specifically about the west branch which is in Guysborough Co. In earlier days the area was noted for its forestry and salmon fishing. The latter has been deleteriously affected by forestry practices. NSNT protects four properties in the area of the river; the land is being allowed to grow naturally and return to forest. On the 6th of December, **Conservation's Evolution** was our talk, by Dr. Peter Wells, a semi-retired aquatic scientist with Environment Canada. Peter spoke about what conservation is, the history and evolution of ecological ideas, and their contribution to the conservation movement, noting the movement's most significant contributors.

**Field Trip Reports** – On the 1st of October, 24 of us took a **Blue Beach Fossil Trip** with Chris Mansky, founder of the Blue Beach Fossil Museum. In the museum itself he spoke about its history and its wonderful fossil collections from early carboniferous times. Following this, lots of time was spent on the beach at low tide looking for fossils; it was a beautiful day and a wonderful trip. November the 3rd, and we had a **Cranberry Hike** with Warren Parson of the Friends of Taylor's head Association with only a few participants in the very rainy weather. The beach was explored for only a short time due to the rain, but there was a side trip to Sheet Harbour where we had an interesting walk behind the museum, finding remains of a long ago lumber mill and further along an ocean tanker that was being loaded with



wood chips for Japan – an interesting end to exploring a new place near Taylor's Head.

**SPRING 2013 – Issue #150** Devoted and long-time HFN Life Member Doris Butters passed away on January 25th. Doris served as President, Editor, and Production Editor of our newsletter, and attended meetings as much as possible in her later years. On page eight of that issue there is a picture and write-up about her busy and productive life. The last HFN meeting which she attended was our Christmas Social in December of 2012. Past HFN presidents and their terms of office (there were 12) were listed; some of them served two separate terms, beginning from HFN's inception in 1975. "12% (of Nova Scotia's land mass) by 2015" Plan – Nova Scotia's Department of Environment and Natural Resources had outlined a plan to add to and expand existing parks, wilderness areas, and natural reserves in order to achieve this.

**Special Reports** – The year-end reports included those of President Janet Dalton, Treasurer Doris Balch, Membership Chair Lillian Risley (the membership numbers revealed a small increase), the Programme Committee, the Newsletter Committee, and the Conservation Committee. For the latter, involvement had included work with Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park, the Urban Forest Master Plan, Buy Back the Mersey, Regional Planning, and the "12% by 2015" Plan. The Colin Stewart Conservation Award (CSCA) was presented to Hope Swinimmer of the Hope for Wildlife Society (which she established 17 years ago) for her commitment to care for Nova Scotia's injured wild animals. Currently, it is the largest facility in our province which receives injured and orphaned animals for rehabilitation and (if possible) return to the wilds.

**Special Articles – Salamanders in Crisis** – Matt Ellerbeck gave an overview of why salamander conservation is needed. Salamanders as a species have been extant for a very long time, but are rarely given much thought. Their habitat, as is that of other wild life, is being fragmented and degraded. For more info, go to [www.savethesalamander.com](http://www.savethesalamander.com).

**Talk Reports** – On the 3rd of January – **The SS Atlantic** was presented by Halifax author, historian, and shipwreck scuba diver Bob Chaulk, who gave a fascinating talk about the White Star Line's transatlantic liner the SS Atlantic, which foundered in a storm on the rocks at Terence Bay, Prospect, in 1873. He related the tragic history of the event and its aftermath. A monument to the wreck and its victims lies near the SS Atlantic Interpretation Centre in Terrence Bay (where we had an interesting trip in September of 2011). On the 7th of February long-time member and former HFN President Michael Downing presented **For Just One Time to take the Northwest Passage**, a talk about his trip there. This was a once in a life-time experience visiting the unique landscape of the far north, its people, and its flora and fauna. Some fascinating history was presented as well as his experiences on land and sea, a place most of us will not get to visit. We were also treated to his very talented and stirring rendition of Stan Rogers' song "The Northwest Passage"! The 7th of March

was **Members' Photo Night**. Peter Webster arranged, hosted, and coordinated the programme. Grace Beazley presented a glimpse of her inspiration in seeing art in trees, inspired by finding a heart-shaped rock while river rafting on the Nahanni. Verna Higgins, who has worked with the Butterfly Atlas programme, presented her exquisite images of butterflies. Dennis Hippen showed his beach-combing finds, and Jim Medill shared a video about constructing a natural pond garden in his back yard. Charles Cron showed views of Coastal Plain Flora as seen in southwestern Nova Scotia.

**Field Trip Reports** – September the 21st and 22nd was the **St. Mary's River Weekend**. Thirteen HFN and Nature Trust Members met for three guided walks in the St. Mary's River area – first at the St. Mary's Association Education and Interpretive Centre to view the interesting displays – and next off to observe the forested, 111-acre property donated by the C. W. Anderson family which borders a river at Mad Falls. The first property revealed evidence of forest succession, and we saw various woods habitat. Sunday morning began with bush-wacking (no trails there) through private property which needed to be crossed to reach the Archibald Conservation Lands. This had been agricultural land in the 1930s, but since 2008 the entire area has been forest-covered. Then, on Sunday afternoon, an old growth flood plain forest was visited. The St. Mary's River has included times where much of the river floodplain was converted to human use, but now there are pockets which are reverting to Acadian Forest. The January 12th trip was our **Annual Sewer Stroll**. Thirty people met at McCormack's Beach on a sunny/cloudy day – more joined later. They scanned the beach area then the Cove in Eastern Passage. Sullivan's Pond was the next stop. A special treat was seeing an Oriole at a private home on Silver's Road. After lunch we visited Tuft's Cove, feeders in Lower Sackville, then ended at the Bedford waterfront. February 12th's trip was **Winter's Night Sky** – a visit to the Halifax Planetarium in the Dunn Building at Dalhousie University. Patrick Kelly presented the hour-long presentation seated on the outer perimeter of the circular auditorium. If it had been a clear night we would have moved outdoors afterwards to view the *real* night sky.

**SPRING 2013 – Issue #151** Stephanie Robertson's editorial told of what happened when she left the back door open – a wonderful surprise visit by a Blue Jay and the trail he left around the house. Sable Island Not 'Protected' – Elizabeth May was the lone objector to the bill being argued about to make Sable Island a National Park; it was designated a National Park Reserve until a third reading. The bill finally passed, and now Sable Island is Canada's 43rd 'National Park'.

**HFN Talk Reports**– The 4th of April gave us **Broken Rivers** by environmentalist and retired biologist Bob





Bancroft. He spoke of how our rivers have been deleteriously impacted because of harmful forest practices. More recently, rules have been introduced to protect rivers and the environment important to them. On the 2nd of May our talk was **Vernal Pools** by John Brazner, who spoke to us about Nova Scotia wetlands. John came from the U.S. in 2004 to work at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, developing habitat fingerprints for coastal wetland fish and the Atlantic salmon population recovery assessment. He helped to develop Nova Scotia's Wetland Conservation Policy, which was approved in September, 2011. On June 4th, **Antarctica for an Hour or a Month** was presented by David MacKenzie, who had worked at DeHaviland, and upon retirement from Bombardier, had stepped down from the position of Director of Sales International. David had worked on, and also transported, a plane to the Chilean Antarctica base for the delivery of essential stores. Landing a plane on a snow-covered Antarctic glacier was challenging, to say the least; weather there is also a very large factor in deciding whether one can fly or not.

**Field Trip Reports** – March 23rd was **Birch Cove Lakes, A Near Urban Gem**. Bob McDonald led this trip into the Birch Cove Lakes, leaving behind the busy Business Park nearby. This is a spectacular wilderness area which contains several pristine lakes, vast tracts of forests, and lots of wildlife. Chris Miller of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society spoke about the huge potential for recreation opportunity here. One can quickly escape the urban environment to hike, swim, skate, or snowshoe. Or if more ambitious, a full day's paddling can be done in a canoe loop. For more information contact [cpawsns.org/birchcovelakes](http://cpawsns.org/birchcovelakes). April's **Bluff Trail Paddle and Hike** was cancelled due to very heavy rain and very cold temperatures. From May 4th to 5th a **Waterfalling in Cumberland County** trip was offered by Grace and Richard Beazley. This time it was overnight in Parrsboro to explore waterfalls between Diligent River and Economy. Five waterfalls were visited on Saturday, then another three waterfalls were visited on Sunday. The weather co-operated for the 12 participants who marvelled at the scenery, the flora, some mammals, and the amazing rocks which always accompany waterfalls. June 13th gave us an evening **Tree Scavenger Hunt**, which began near the Dingle Tower, followed along the shore of the Northwest Arm, then continued up the Loop Trail, using Trees of Nova Scotia by Gary Saunders as a guide. Native and introduced species of trees were compared. The Loop Trail went through hardwood forest, leading to a hilltop which had been burned over some 40 years ago, where there were some Jack Pine. It then proceeded to an area near the Frog Pond where one White Ash was found. Night time brought the trip to an end.



**AUTUMN 2013 – Issue #152**



**Special Reports** – The Sackville River Association's Fish Friends End-of-Programme Report – 'Fish Friends' 2013 began with 12 school classes approved for sponsorship by the Sackville Rivers Association. During January, specially prepared aquariums were set up to receive 'eyed' salmon eggs which were delivered to the schools in March. After hatching, 250 trout fry and 2,140 salmon fry were released, on ten field trips, which took place between May 22nd and June 20th.

**Talk Reports** – The 5th September talk, in two parts, was **Marine Biodiversity** by Dalhousie Biology Professor Dr. Boris Worm. In Part I, about the conservation of marine biodiversity, we learned that only 9% of earth's ocean species have been identified! The plethora of marine diversity ranges from microscopic krill to the magnificent giants, the whales. Deleterious changes in fishing habits are reducing diversity drastically.

Part two was about the necessity for Conservation of Sharks. Sharks are an open ocean species and important predators for keeping sealife balanced. They have survived five major extinctions and are the oldest predator on earth. Atlantic Canada has 20 species of shark.

**Field Trip Reports** – July 6th – the **Silver Garden Walk**. Donna and John Silver own a large, beautiful garden on Prospect Bay. The 8-acre property began as a modest garden in the 1970's but now includes a wooded hillside, two large ponds, and meandering waterways, with many rhododendrons and a variety of annuals and perennials. The thirty plus members later ate their lunch either in front of the garden shed or at the Silvers' private beach on Prospect Bay. July 27th – **Meander River Biota Survey**. Twenty-eight members participated in this natural species inventory of the Meander River Conservation Easement. This NS Nature Trust land is the second property to be adopted by the Halifax Field Naturalists. Bob McDonald gave a brief description of the area, then people took off to record their findings. Botanists made their recordings, birders theirs, and the lichenologists moved at a slower pace to record their findings. The survey sheets collected indicated a successful day. August 3rd – an **Urban Ecology Walk** with entomologist, naturalist, and historian Christopher Majka in Camp Hill Cemetery. Chris shared his extensive knowledge of beetles and other insects, particularly the tree dwellers. Camp Hill Cemetery was established in 1844 and holds the graves of several famous people. There are trees and shrubs there which were planted over 150 years ago, some non-native. Lichens were observed on several of the tombstones, and the tour ended with Chris speaking about British Naval History, which has played an introductory role in the presence of many plant and insect species we saw on the tour.



**WINTER 2014 – Issue # 153** Pat Leader is involved in the production of interpretive signs for trails of the Halifax Northwest Trails Association, often with lots of historical background, and many ups and downs! Pat



gained experience in this while living in Newfoundland. The latest sign she helped with was for the Mill Run Trail in Bedford.

**Talk Reports** – October 3rd was **Fern Landscaping** with Ian Jack of Fernwood Plant Nursery in Hubbards. Ferns are an easy-care garden plant, and his nursery has over 40 varieties. Ferns have been around for 400 million years, and he shared information about their characteristics and their methods of reproduction. To learn more go to [www.fernwoodplantnursery.ca](http://www.fernwoodplantnursery.ca).

The 7th of November gave us **Sustaining HRM's Urban Forest, The Urban Forest Master Plan**. John Charles, HRM's Urban Forest Master Planner, spoke to us on the significance of trees in our city. They improve air quality, water retention, UV protection, wildlife habitat, provide a cooling effect, and give great enjoyment. In 2001 City Council put forward a motion to develop a functional plan for Halifax's Urban Forest. It was derailed by Hurricane Juan, beetles in Point Pleasant Park, and White Juan. It was 2008 before a plan was begun in earnest. Approved in September, 2012, it included decisions regarding trees on both public and private property. Tree planting is being carried out and areas have been prioritised for management. A mix of varieties will be used such as Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Oak, White Pine, and American Elm. Norway Maple will be eliminated as time allows, since it is considered a 'weed tree'. On the 5th of December we had **Florida Birding** with Bob and Wendy McDonald. In April of 2013 they explored parts of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail established in 1997, a self-guided highway trail comprised of 23 different zones with 515 designated birding sites. They began their 3,000 km trip from Tampa, down Florida's west coast to the Florida Keys, including a day trip to the Dry Tortugas, returning via the Atlantic Coast and back to Clearwater. They saw a very large variety of butterflies and dragonflies in Everglades National Park, and many, many other interesting species of wildlife. On the 2nd of January **N.S. Birding Areas** was given by Sue Abbot from Bird Studies Canada, a national, non-profit organisation committed to advancing the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of wild birds and their habitat. To be recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA), one of four criteria at the site must be fulfilled – a Globally Threatened Species, a Restricted-Range Species, a Biome-Restricted Species, or a Congregating Species. Some 12,000 IBAs are recognised internationally; in Canada there are 600. The northernmost is Inglefield mountain on Ellesmere Island; the southernmost Point Pelee on Lake Erie in Ontario. The largest is Queen Maud Gulf in Nunavut; the smallest Ile Pacquet in the Magdalen Islands.

**Field Trip Reports** – On September 17th we went to **Point Pleasant Park** with Peter Bigelow, HRM's Public Lands Manager. Ten years post-Juan, he led thirty plus people on a trip through to observe the changes since then. Peter interspersed his talk with historical and cultural information as well as old and new management practices. Hurricane Juan occurred on September 28th, 2003. The park was closed for a year while it was restored to a useable and safe condition, during which

time the natural history, cultural factors, and recreational uses of the park were taken into account. New, post-Juan features were 'kiosk' display cases with artifacts highlighting various historical and cultural aspects. Self-guided tours are available by downloading the audio tour app.

October 19th was a **Whopper Drop Trail Trip**. Seventeen people explored this 5-km looped trail that is located behind Bayer's and Susie's Lakes. The walk's purpose was to focus on the abundant flora along the trail. This was an informative, invigorating, and enjoyable outing. November 16th gave us **Wetland Restoration**. Twenty-three people joined ecologist Tony Bowron to hike the a section of the tidal Cheverie Creek on the south shore of the Minas Basin. The original wetland was dyked by the Acadian settlers in the 1800's which transformed it into valuable and productive farmland. In 2001, research and community outreach efforts led to the first demonstration saltmarsh restoration project in Nova Scotia. However, one consequence of reverting the land back to a saltmarsh was the loss of the trees there.

**SPRING 2014 – #154 Special Reports** President Janet Dalton felt it was time to acknowledge the contribution of many of our members for their efforts within our organisation. The 2013 Financial Statement, Membership Report (a slight increase), and Programme and Newsletter reports were also presented. Gareth Harding and René Lyons submitted Goshawk Over Morar Antigonish Co. The two were exploring their woods on the Northumberland Strait for the usual numerous warblers when they were pleasantly surprised to spot a young Goshawk. They related the consequent behaviour of the other birds, including a warning Crow, and then the find of Crow remains the next day, most probably killed by the Goshawk.

**Talk Reports** – On February 6th we had **McNab's Island**, aptly named a gem in our harbour. Friends of McNab's Island's Carolyn Mont described our three harbour islands – Devil's, Lawlor's, and McNab's. McNab's was settled early on by Europeans, was used by the military until the end of WWII, and as an Entertainment Centre for Halifax/Dartmouth residents. Kerosene was first tried out on the McNab's searchlight in place of the usual, notoriously smokey, whale oil. March 6th was our annual **Members' Photo Night** following our 2013 AGM. Shirley McIntyre began with photos from the Avalon and Bonavista Peninsula taken in 2009; Keith Vaughan showed close-up shots of wildflowers at Cabin Lake, Smiley's, and Long Lake; David Patriquin – pictures from his Ecological Assessment of Plant Communities of the Williams Lake Backland; Burkhard Plache – the Mediterranean Island of Majorca, in 2013; Lesley Jane Butters presented her very artistic and mostly close-up photos of the amazing details of flowers, insects, moths, ice, and birds, to name but a few.



**Field Trip Reports** – On January 8th we went to the Nova Scotia Museum to see **Science on a Sphere**, a system that projects geographical/environmental data on a spherical globe screen, the first permanent installation in Canada. The first presentation was related to geology, with volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, melting ice-caps, and plate tectonics. The second was about weather – the creation and movement of some major tropical storms and hurricanes. On February 8th we had our **Annual Sewer Stroll** with Dennis Hippert. In spite of the dire weather forecast, 40 plus participants began at McCormack's Beach in Eastern Passage, along the harbour to Hartlen's Point, then back to Dartmouth to Dartmouth Cove and Sullivan's Pond stopping at Shearwater sewage outlet on the way. By 1:30 the rainy, foggy conditions were affecting visibility. However, some worthwhile birds were seen, one of which was a Snowy Owl. The **HFN Book Club** – this newly-formed club met on two occasions: November 20th with Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us*; and January 15th with Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*. On January 25th and February 6th our first **Opportune Snowshoeing** trips took place. On the first, four people ventured to Shubie Park on a beautiful morning, travelling along Lake Charles Trail in the newly fallen snow. The second was to Uniacke Estate Museum Park with eight people, an area which tends to have more snow. Again a beautiful morning was enjoyed, along the Old Post Road-Barrens Trail Loop. On February 23rd, we joined **Walking the Rock Garden** with St. Mary's geology Professor Howard Donahoe, beginning at the main entrance to the Public Gardens. Along the way he pointed out the rocks used in older buildings (sedimentary, igneous, and metaphoric) along Spring Garden Rd., all brought from both local and out of province quarries. The foundation rocks of the Lord Nelson Hotel were from a Guysborough quarry. This hotel also used polished marble on its lobby floor and sandstone in the stairs leading up to the lobby. Other buildings highlighted were the BMO building at Queen and Spring Garden, the old Halifax Library, and St. Mary's Basilica. A wealth of information was provided.



**SUMMER 2014 – #155** As our 40th Anniversary approached in 2015, a call was made for contributions to acknowledge it. The Nova Scotia Nature Trust launched a seven million dollar campaign to preserve a 30 km archipelago of 100 Eastern Shore Islands stretching from Clam Harbour to Mushaboom Harbour. A mystery donor made a generous donation and promised to match other donations.

**Special Reports** – The **2014 Conference and AGM of Nature Nova Scotia**. On the weekend of May 3th to June 1st, our annual provincial conference was held at the Gaelic College in Cape Breton. Quite a few young naturalists attended with their families. Their were excellent presentations on Cape Breton Plate Tecton-

ics; Cape Breton Coyotes; the struggles of the American Marten; field trips on birding, botany, the ocean, and woodlands; talks on Cape Breton waterfalls; the AGM itself; and then trips to Bird Island and Lake Ainslie. A truly wonderful weekend.

**Talk Reports** – On May 1st we learned about the **Sackville River** and the Sackville River Association from Walter Regan, its President. He spoke to us about the group's long-time efforts to bring back the Atlantic Salmon. Since 1988 the society has been working to protect and restore the river's environment (which covers a distance of 40 km from its headwaters), working closely with the Department of Fisheries right from the start. Urban development has greatly impacted the river and effective steps were taken to involve the community to remedy this. A watershed Management Plan was developed and included both the Little Sackville River and the Sackville River. They also established "River Ranger" and "Fish Friends" with school children, a fish ladder being placed in one area to monitor the number and variety of fish moving up the river. There have been many positive outcomes. On April 3rd Peter and Gillian Webster gave us **East African Savannah**. For their 25th wedding anniversary, they had a seven-day safari to Africa's Serengeti Plain starting from Nairobi, Kenya. Their first destination was the East African Rift Valley on the western border of Masai Mara National Reserve. This is a large reserve with exceptional populations of lions, leopards, and cheetahs, and annually it experiences the migration of zebras, Thompson's Gazelles, Wildebeest and Topi Antelopes. They also saw hippos in the Mara River and crocodiles on its opposite bank. They also visited alkaline Lake Naivasha, where there were spectacular birds, including Yellow-bellied Stork, Flamingo, and several species of Ibis. On the 5th of June, Director of the Maritime Butterfly Atlas, John Klymko, presented **Butterfly Atlas**. John has conducted studies on bees, dragonflies, and birds for the last five years, working out of the Atlantic Conservation Centre in Sackville N.B. He outlined the purpose of the Atlas, saying that an abundance of various species of butterflies is a good indicator for a healthy environment. The Atlas was to be published some time in 2015. The **Monarch Butterfly Movie** – The Halifax Chapter of the Young Naturalists Club arranged a showing of the 3D Imax Canadian Documentary "Flight of the Butterflies". This was a wondrous movie about Canadian Dr. Fred Urquhart's (played by Gordon Pinsent) almost 40-year scientific investigation into the migration destination of the Monarch Butterfly – the longest insect migration in the world, from Central Mexico to the U.S. and Canada.

**Field Trip Reports** – April 6th took us to both **Laurie and Oakfield Parks** with leader Shirley McIntyre, a long-time HFN member. Both parks are located fairly close to each other on Shubenacadie Grand Lake. Shirley's curiosity was sparked by the closeness of the two parks so she had delved into their history. They originated with English immigrant John Wimburn Laurie, in 1862, who established Oakfield town, owning over 3,000 acres of land along the lakeshore. We explored Laurie Park's picnic area, a trail along the shoreline, and



then drove three km to Oakfield Park, walking what was no doubt the driveway into Laurie's home. It was an enjoyable day exploring these two provincial parks made possible by the generosity of the Laurie family's descendants. April 26th took us **Waterfalling** with Richard and Grace Beazley – from the Gaspereau to the Kentville area on the south mountain side, in King's County. Seventeen people trekked into the Wolfville Watershed Nature Preserve, managed by the NS Nature Trust, to observe three waterfalls, then went on to Tinker Brook Falls cascading down the mountain under tall hemlocks with verdant, mossy undergrowth. This was an ideal spot for lunch. Next was a waterfall at the south end of Sunken Lake, which necessitated rope-holding. The last two falls were close to Hwy 101 near New Minas – Highbury Gardens Falls and Moore's Brook Falls, the latter being very spectacular, with a 15m vertical drop. May 11th was our **Cape Split** trip with 15 participants beginning their hike in foggy conditions with the sun breaking out in the afternoon. Besides some wildlife and birds, the usual spring flora ephemerals were plentiful.



**FALL 2014 – #156** A request went out for members to write about a favorite natural place in N.S. honouring HFN's 40th anniversary. The 2014 Nova Scotia Nature Trust's Annual Dinner was to be held October 23rd. Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness area would soon be hosting a Community Session to gather local knowledge from its users. In Memoriam – avid canoeist and outdoorsman Milton Gregg, a retired Canadian Army Lieutenant Colonel who along with his wife Norma contributed to the functioning of HFN in the late 1980's and into the 90's, was honoured. He greatly enjoyed outdoor activities and was Programme Committee Chair for three years. Long time HFN member Barry Sawyer died in June. He and his late wife were also keen outdoor people, canoeing, observing wildflowers, and other outdoor pursuits.

**Talk Reports** – On the 3rd of April the **East African Savannah** trip report was continued, and Gillian shared the challenges of night time camping in the Serengeti! Another destination was the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where they saw an immense volcanic caldera, one of the World's Seven Wonders. Peter also spoke about their experiences of Kenyan and Tanzanian societies. On the 4th of September, **Native Wild Bees**, with Dalhousie PhD candidate Andy Melathopolous, was our presentation – all about his bee studies and findings. We were shown many different bees, including one that was really a fly which had evolved to resemble a bee. There are many species of wild bees which mostly function as individuals, rather different from honey bees which are part of a colony. He also shared information about the early origins of bees/wasps, 100 to 110 million years ago.

**Field Trip Reports** – May 24th took us on a three km

**Sackville River Walk** along the Bedford/Sackville Connector Greenway with Damon Conrad, Co-ordinator of the Sackville Rivers Association (SRA). We stopped at times to learn about the river's history from the interpretive signs along the way. The past two centuries have seen many changes to the river, including building dams for powering sawmills, straightening the river to make log drives more efficient, removing tons of rock from the river bed to build highways, and removing forest vegetation for housing and commercial development. Damon told us of SRA's efforts to restore the river habitat for fish, and the need to restore natural 'meandering' in the river. To help prevent erosion on the river banks, vigorous shrubs have been planted, aided by Beavers who leave willow branches which root themselves into the bank. The most natural part of the river is through the Rifle Range Land so it is inaccessible to the public. On June 7th we hiked **McIntosh Run** off Herring Cove Rd. in Spryfield with Ingrid Plache. Part of this trail traverses an area that was burned years ago, and it continues along onto the old road to York Redoubt. At a high point overlooking Flat Lake participants saw another area which had been burned in a fairly recent fire. July 12th saw us at Prospect for a **Prospect Coastal Hike** with Peter Webster and David Patriquin. Fourteen participated in this joint trip with the N.S. Wild Flora Society which began and ended at Inner Gull Island not far from Prospect. The trail's narrow path meanders over granite ridges, through mixed flora and ferns, and around wetlands heading towards Prospect. Brown, scorched tips of spruce were noted; we surmised this may have been due to post-tropical storm Arthur. Many small blue butterflies and seabirds were observed. Upon return, through a telescope, we had a chance to observe a young eagle eating a Cormorant. On August 10th we went for an **Eastern Shore Paddle**. Six members went on this canoe/kayak trip from Little Harbour to Owl's Head on the Eastern Shore. Even a fair distance from shore it was still a shallow and sandy bottom. At an island lunch, the many islands slated to become protected by NS Nature Trust were seen. After paddling to a larger outer island there was a sudden shower which brought whitecaps; nearer shore it was calmer which allowed for more shore exploration. On August 23rd we visited **Common Roots Urban Farm** on the busy corner of Robie and Quinpool, the site of the former Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS). Project Co-Ordinator Jayme Melrose said the farm's goal is to support Capital Health's Mission of 'Healthy People, Healthy Communities'. The 1.4 hectares is available for the next five to twelve years while Capital Health waits to see if they need to expand the QEHS nearby. The QEHS demolition site of crushed concrete had been covered with topsoil and opened in June, 2102. There are both individual and family plots; a Market Garden where a variety of fresh vegetables are harvested then delivered to the Kynock Parker Street Furniture Bank; a new greenhouse provided in partnership with Halifax Seed; and a flower farm with perennials and annuals. From September 5th to the 7th was our first **'Melmerby Weekend'**. The Melmerby was a ship that ran aground on the beach there in 1890. Perfect



weather at Allan and Stephanie's summer cottages on the Northumberland Strait, Pictou County gave the participants a warm weekend with warm seawater. Saturday was cooler, but comfortable for a longish walk to Roy's Island. At low tide in the early afternoon, participants were introduced to some interesting fossils below a cliff at the eastern end of the beach. After an overnight rainfall, the weather was fine for Sunday and a trip to impressive Park's Falls near Thorburn.



**WINTER 2015 – #157** For HFN's 40th Anniversary a members' Art Exhibit at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History was planned, with a chance for to display a various of art forms. Grace Beazley highly recommended the book Journey Through Eastern Old-Growth Forests by Jamie Simpson.

**Special Reports** – In celebration of HFN'S 40th Anniversary members had been encouraged to write something relating to nature. Grace Beazley wrote about her trip of a lifetime, which was to Sable Island. Richard Beazley wrote of a Very Rare Sighting which was of a bear and her three cubs while paddling in Kejimikujik National Park. Lesley Jane Butters wrote about her Favourite Field Trip which was to Smiley's Provincial Park many years ago. Many spring flowers showing their splendour in the month of May were enjoyed and photographed before she moved on to the gypsum quarries near Windsor to enjoy other natural splendours. Jonathon Davies wrote a poem entitled Winter Beeches. Brian Ferguson wrote about an Unforgettable Close Encounter, a 1970's trip to Newfoundland where he and his fellow canoe paddlers narrowly escaped the possibly fatal capsizing of an iceberg. Judi Hayes contributed two descriptive poems, Nature's Musings #1, and #2.

**Special Articles** – Brain Ferguson wrote a lengthy and interesting account **Touring Wales by Bicycle; Following Dylan Thomas**. His trip began in Edinburgh travelling by train to Chester, England near the border of Wales. Inspired by Thomas's poetry, he followed the sites of his poems cycling around Wales. He took a train to France, then cycled along the Normandy coast. At this point his bicycle tires were very worn and he was unable to buy the same kind; when they finally gave up the ghost he resorted to hitch-hiking (and some interesting adventures). He visited Brussels and Amsterdam (another interesting adventure), then continued on to Munich. **HFN'S Fourth Decade** – Ursula Grigg and Stephanie Robertson summarised HFN activities from old newsletters (from the Summer of 2005 to the Fall of 2007), highlighting reports of meetings, field trips, talks, and other noteworthy naturalist items.

**HFN Talks** – October 2nd offered **Lighthouses** with Chris Mills, a former lighthouse keeper (from 1989 to 1997) currently with the Coast Guard and one of four founding members of the N.S. Lighthouse Preservation Society. His lighthouse interests began in his childhood

(but he was afraid of the sound of foghorns!). He spoke about their importance, the monotony of lightkeepers' work, the risks, and the thrills. He had many beautiful pictures of lights from B.C., N.B., and N.S. – recounting some of their history. There were also lenses and diaphones (fog-horns) to learn about. This was a most interesting talk. On November 6th – we had **Give Me Mountains**. Dr. Peter Wells, an HFN member and Dalhousie Professor Emeritus, spoke on his love of mountains. This has led him to various mountain treks, specifically his 2013 22-day trip to the Himalayas in Nepal. Weather at the time prevented the group from reaching Base Camp but it was a wonderful adventure nonetheless; he also spoke about Nepal's culture, its land, and its people. December 4th brought us **Healthy Environments** with Jamie Simpson, Executive Director of the East Coast Environmental Law Association. Apparently, in some countries, people have legal rights to a Healthy Environment. At the other end of the spectrum, 'Chemical Alley', just outside Sarnia Ontario, is one of the worst sites for serious health problems, and in some places it is no longer safe to eat berries or wild edible food due to contaminants. Canada still has no national environmental rights; nor does Nova Scotia. Ontario, Quebec, and our three territories have some partial environmental rights.

**HFN Field Trips** – On September 27th we went to **Cabin Lake Trail** with HFN member Pat Leader who researched this area and led eleven people there. Small Cabin Lake is at the northern edge of Hemlock Ravine and the edge of a new development known as Royal Hemlock Subdivision. Late HFN member Colin Stewart worked tirelessly to restrain development in this area. The walk began uphill off Starboard Rd. We saw ducks and early signs of fall. On October 18th we went to a **Tree Plantation Visit** in Chelsea, Lunenburg Co. (where we first visited a fish ladder before going to Lowell Demont's Tree Farm). The 32 ha farm is a personal interest of his; it was once owned by his grandfather's brother and Lowell had the chance to purchase it in 1972. Much of the burned-over cleared land is covered with up to 40-year old trees, including Red, Scotch, and White Pine, and Colorado, Blue, and Black Spruce, European Larch, and Balsam Fir. Two small portions of the property are devoted to Christmas trees which helps generate some cash flow. Lowell shared with us the ups and downs, and the successes and failures of his labour of love. On November 14th we went to the granite and bluestone quarries around **Purcell's Cove**, with 35 people attending. Bluestone is the older of the two types of rocks and is sedimentary, originating some 500 million years ago at the bottom of the ocean; granite is a younger, igneous rock that originated some 380 million years ago when hot, liquid magma pressed upward, then cooled to crystallise into granite. The granite quarry was first used for operations in the 18th century and was still in use until 1957. At the top of the hill, the holes spaced along the margins gave evidence of how stones were cut from the bedrock. The next stop was Bluestone Rd., on the eastern side of Purcell's Cove Rd., to the former site of a quarry. This is now filled with water. The stone





cut here tended to be a smaller size. Many of the buildings at Dalhousie University were cut from these quarries. The group then returned to the Social Club, glad to enter a warmer place!



**SPRING 2015 – #158** Preparations were progressing for the 40th anniversary event at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History – an HFN Members' Art Exhibit to display nature-related art works. Twenty-four members had registered. The HFN Book Club continued with the latest book being *Connemara: Listening to the Wind* by Tim Robinson. A 'Festival of Nature' was to be the title of Nature Nova Scotia's (NNS) 2015 annual AGM and Conference from June 5th to 7th in Sackville N.B., jointly hosted by NNS and Nature New Brunswick (NNB). A "Thanks To HFN" was expressed by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) in their January Newsletter 'Landlines', congratulating us for our 40 years of important work. They also acknowledged HFN's special support of and contributions to their projects.

**Special Reports** – Janet Dalton presented her report for the year acknowledging the contribution of various members over the years. Bob McDonald and Clare Robinson presented the Report of the Conservation Committee. Lillian Risley presented the Membership Report which showed an increase again. Richard and Grace Beazley gave the Programme Report – ten presentations and 14 field trips had been held over the year. Ingrid Plache shared the Financial Report, and Stephanie Robertson gave the Newsletter Report with her thanks to all the others that help in this big effort. More members' contributions were sent in for HFN'S 40th Anniversary. Gillian Webster submitted the poem 'Reflections On Morning Glory Flowers' – winter changes into spring and then into summer when the Morning Glory finally shows itself. Michael Follow wrote a poem 'Spatardock' about those small, yellow pond lillies. Gareth Harding proffered 'A Winter Hike At Crystal Crescent' when he saw there in 2009 several bird species, some Otter, and a Porcupine arriving back at the parking lot as dusk was settling in with the beginnings of sleet. Shirley McIntyre wrote of 'A Memorable Working Trip In The Tobeatic Wilderness' (to live-trap Beaver) – a very challenging ten-day trip in November around the mid-70's with a range of weather conditions being encountered. Richard Beazley wrote 'Got A Natural Curiosity? Join Us In the Field' in which he summarised the learning curve in Natural History since HFN began 40 years ago. HFN'S Fourth Decade (Part I of the first five years of the decade) was summarised from old HFN newsletters by Stephanie Robertson, from Winter 2007/2008 up to and including Spring 2010.

**Talk Reports** – On January 7th – **Conservation Lands** presented by Nova Scotia Nature Trust's Karen McKendry described how the Nature trust works, relying on donations, grants, and other revenue sources. The

Trust is in its 20th year and has formally protected 9,253 acres of land across N.S! It targets rare, threatened, or irreplaceable sites critical for plants and/or wildlife. On the night of February 5th we had **Climate Change** (suitably in blizzard conditions) and 28 people showed up to hear Dr. Tom Duck's talk. Dr. Duck, an Associate Professor in the department of Physics and Atmospheric Science at Dalhousie University specialising in Arctic Climate and air quality, also operates an atmospheric observatory in the Dunn building. He provided an overview of climate changes across Canada, and outlined the rising rate sea levels. He said, "Climate is what you expect and weather is what you get." March 5th was our **Annual Members' Photo Night** – a favourite which follows our AGM. Talented Lesley Jane Butters began with her images of ice and the patterns they can form, progressing through different aspects of the insect world and then to Blanding's turtles. Elliot and Judy Hayes then took us on a canal cruise across much of Eastern Europe from a 20-day adventure, beginning in Amsterdam, following the Rhine Canal to the Rhine River and stopping in Cologne Germany visiting cathedrals. In medieval Miltenberg they saw half-timbered houses and the oldest inn in Germany. They also visited Austria and Vienna following through to Budapest. New member Molly LeBlance showed some close-ups of nature including a Sundew, and the feeding of a baby Robin, ending with the magnificent redwoods of B.C. Burkhard Plache's theme was aquatic plants, taken as he canoed in the southwestern end of the province. Peter Wells was the final presenter with his mountain-themed pictures showing mountains of Western Canada and their crystal clear glacial lakes. He ended with some views around the Northwest Arm and Sir Sandford Fleming Park.

**Field Trip Reports** – January 3rd was our **Annual Sewer Stroll** this year with Dennis Hippert as leader of 20 participants. The trip began at McCormack's Beach Provincial Park in Eastern Passage, going on from Hartlen's Point to the mouth of the Sackville River and then on to Point Pleasant Park. They saw the usual familiar species of birds with some highlights, including a Eurasian Kestrel. This last sighting led to a Global TV film crew interviewing some participants for its evening news. On February 2nd and 7th, and March 7th, **Opportunistic Snowshoeing** was possible with Richard Beazley. The first trip was to Uniacke Estate Museum Park with three participants snowshoeing the Red Spruce Trail on a cold morning. The second trek was in Bedford around the Jack Lake Trail with only one brave soul on this cold, crisp morning! The third bright and sunny outing was near the last one, at Sandy Lake Park in Bedford with seven people. On February 12th we visited **The Aquatron Laboratory** in Dalhousie's Oceanography building with organiser Rachelle Watts. It contains a water treatment facility, academic learning facilities, 'wet labs' for research, and six large tanks. Of interest was the fact that seawater is pumped up from the Northwest Arm (under the streets) for the labs. Professors from other universities and some industry types also use the facility for research, and the well-being of animals is well-monitored. Facility manager John Batt led the tour.



# HFN TALKS

## COSTA RICA

10 MAY  
– Janet Dalton

George Mitchell and his wife have visited Costa Rica during three winters, spending about nine months in total there. He began his talk with an overview:

1. Geography Regions – Rain Forest, Cloud Forest, Pacific Coast, High Country, and Volcanic North. Species – 2. Mammals, 3. Arthropods, 4. Reptiles and Amphibians, 5. Butterflies, 6. Humming Birds, 7. Some Exotics, 8. Birds, 9. Tanagers.

Costa Rica is a small country bordering two other countries, Nicaragua to the north, and Panama to the southeast. At Costa Rica's narrowest point, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea are only about 75 miles apart. The capital is San José, located in the centre of the country. Mountain ranges run the length of the country like a backbone, and have active volcanos. Rivers begin in these mountains and flow to lowlands near the coasts, often forming spectacular waterfalls in high elevations. Rainforest fills the country's southwestern region and stretch along the Caribbean coast. Cloudforests cover many mountains throughout Costa Rica. In the northwest, tropical dry forests are full of trees that lose their leaves in the driest time of year. The wet season is from May to November and the dry season is from December to April. Bananas and coffee are their most important crops.

**Rain Forest** – The rainforest has a groundcover of low shrubs with large umbrella-like leaves and large fern-like plants. Many large tree roots are in this layer, as the taller trees are 'stilted' or buttressed at their large bases in amongst the shrubby groundcover, with many vines clinging to them. The trees grow to be 50 ft high. The high canopy reveals the tops of tropical palms and many more tree species; as many as 50 to 100 and more. Many trees host epiphytes – plants that grow on trees or other plants but do not harm them. They are not parasites, but use the host as a growing space.

**Cloud Forest** – The most famous area of cloudforest is in Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. This park was the first park visited by George and his wife. The park is blanketed by a soft mist caused by cool, moist winds from the Caribbean Sea. Winds sweep up the mountainsides and the cold air causes the moisture to condense into a fog. There were epiphytes on most of the trees there.

**Pacific Coast** – Pacific coast/lowland wet forests have the greatest diversity of tree species. In one hectare there would be as many as 200 different species – both deciduous and evergreen. There were Palms, Mahogany (*Swietenia Macrophylla*), Balsa (*Ochroma Lagopus*), a soft wood familiar to model airplane builders, *Cecropia*, and Mangroves trees. Mangrove trees occur in areas exposed to salt water. George mentioned that the leaves fall off constantly and it is easy to walk through this type of forest.

**High Country** – High country areas are found on the slopes of the mountains and are profuse with epiphytes, orchids, bromeliads, mosses, and ferns. In higher elevations these forests are treeless, with grasses and shrubs instead.

**Volcanic North** – Many volcanos are found in the mountains, the most famous being the Arenal Volcano which was dormant for 400 years until it erupted in 1968; it has erupted

flowing lava several times since; in some of George's pictures the lava looked like gray mud. On the Pacific Coast there are long stretches of beaches and George mentioned that he stayed at Corcovado North Park where there was a Ranger Station; the temperature there was about 38°C. At Manuel Antonio Park the lodge they were in was at a higher elevation; it was cool at night, and there was a grand view of great oak trees. There are four types of sea turtles that lay eggs on the Pacific beaches – Leatherback, Hawksbill, Green, and Olive Ridley.

**Mammals** – George showed pictures of four monkey species, Howler Monkey, Spider Monkey, Squirrel Monkey, and Capuchin Monkey; also a Coatiundi with a white nose – a type of raccoon. They saw Wild Peccary – a type of pig which is quite dangerous, and Two- and Three-toed Sloths, one on a power line. The Three-toed Sloth was not in a tree, which was unusual. The latter had a greenish tinge to its fur. A nocturnal Olingo (also in the racoon family) had large yellow eyes, and was seen raiding a Hummingbird feeder. George mentioned that there were many species of ants and so it is understandable that there are Giant Anteaters there also.

**Arthropods** – Arthropods mentioned were katydids that looked like leaves; grasshoppers with wings like leaves; and others with 'thorns' on their ends. One grasshopper looked like moss, and another Monkey Grasshopper had legs that came out on its side. There were dragonflies with big red eyes, and many more types of ants – black biting ants, leaf cutters, and many with their nests under ground. Some ants live on a fungus that grows on the leaves taken back to these underground nests. The ants' greatest enemies are wasps and of course the Giant Anteater. Spiders were shown; there is a spider that if you are hit by it, it feels like you have been hit by a bullet! Wolf Spiders were shown as well, and a nocturnal Orange-crested Tarantula. Beetles were pictured and one looked for all the world as if it had gold joints in its leg.

**Reptiles and Amphibians** – We were shown Common Rain, Red-eyed Leaf, Masked Tree, Fleischmann's, Emerald Glass, Orange and Black Poison, and Dart Frogs. Shown also was a very small frog (one inch), and a Golden-Eyed Leaf frog with big eyes. The lizards shown were the Emerald-Basilisk Lizard, three species of Iguana, and cayman or fresh water crocodiles. The snakes were Blunt-Headed Tree Snake seen only at night, and an Eyelash Viper snake which is deadly.

**Butterflies** – There are 16,000 types of Lepidoptera, but most of them are moths with a lesser percent being butterflies. Shown were Blue Green Black, Black-Orange, Swallowtail, Tiger Wing Orange, Blue Morpho, Pink Satyr, Glass Wing, and Zebra Long Wings. Some had decorations which looked like heads, thereby confusing predatory birds.

**Hummingbirds** – There are 'Hummingbird Galleries' where one can see over 30 different species. Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve has the best Gallery for viewing hummingbirds. George showed pictures of a Green Hermit Hummingbird with a down-curved bill. The Little Hermit is a very tiny bird, and we also saw pictures of the Green Crowned Brilliant, Cinnamon, Rufous-tailed, White-throated Mountain-gem, Magenta-throated, Crowned Woodnymph, and Blackbellied Hummingbirds, the latter with unruly feath-





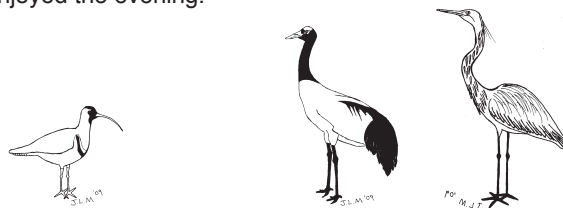
ers. If I have missed some I apologise!

**Some Exotics** – the Black-headed Trogon, a Turquoise-browed Motmot with ‘tennis racket’ tail feathers, and Black Vultures which feed on racoons.

**Birds** – were the Ibis, Snowy Egret, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Sun Bittern, Boat-billed Heron, Tityra Crow Puffbird, Brown Hooded Parrot, Oropendola, Montezuma Parakeet, and Scarlet Macaws (these birds are making a comeback). Also, Fiery-billed Aracari, Chestnut Toucan, Keel-billed Toucan, and the Blue Dacnis (related to the tanagers). The last bird shown was the Resplendent Quetzal, which has two long tail feathers and a green body with a red belly, a small bird with a green tufted crest on the head. Part of its magnificent, very long tail is white near the body and then turns to green. The ancient Mayans and Aztecs

worshipped Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, who wore a headdress of quetzal feathers. Mayans made killing the bird a capital offense, and it is still held in great esteem by their descendants.

**Tanagers** – They are colourful and there are dozens of them, including the Blue-gray Tanager, the Common Bush Tanager, and the Dusky-faced Tanager. Also included with this group was the Red-legged Honeycreeper, a beautiful blue-purple bird. George’s presentation was most interesting and his pictures were wonderful. I am sure everyone enjoyed the evening.



## HFN FIELD TRIPS

In the previous Issue, Summer 2015 (#159), we published a 1983 Cape Split Hike report by Dorothy Morris in honour of our 40th Anniversary. Its associated species list did not give the Latin names. We sent the list to Charles Cron, President of the N.S. Wildflora Society, and he very kindly ID’d them. Here they are, along with an explanatory note from Charles.

“Hi Stephanie: ... The list order was slightly rearranged to allow time to look up spellings and plant families. I did not correct for the new classification in The Flora of North America but stuck with the older system used by Hinds in The Flora of New Brunswick (2000). This is the old Britton and Brown classification which was in common use at that time and is also largely followed in Newcomb’s Wildflower Guide and others. Most of us are still using this system. ... ”

### CAPE SPLIT SPECIES (1983)

#### Flowers in bloom or budding

Northern Coralroot	<i>Coralorhiza trifida</i>
Oxalis	<i>Oxalis montana</i>
Wild Sarsaparilla	<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>
Violets	<i>Viola</i> spp.
White	probably <i>V. blanda</i>
Mauve	probably <i>V. conspersa</i>
Blue	probably <i>V. adunca</i>
Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla tridentata</i>
Rose Twisted stalk	<i>Streptopus roseus</i>
White Mandarin	<i>Streptopus amplexifolius</i>
White Toothwort	<i>Dentaria diphylla</i>
Baneberry	<i>Actea rubra</i>
and/or	<i>Actea pachypodia</i> (both bloom at the same time)
Mountain Maple	<i>Acer spicatum</i>
Moose Maple	<i>Acer pensylvanicum</i>
Buttercups	<i>Ranunculus</i> spp.
Swamp	<i>R. septentrionalis</i>
Hooked	<i>R. recurvatus</i>
Kidney-leaved	<i>R. abortivus</i>
False Solomon Seal	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>
Naked Mitrewort	<i>Mitella nuda</i>
Sedum	<i>Sedum rosaceae</i> (now <i>Rhodiola</i> )
Sweet Cecily	<i>Osmorhiza claytonia</i>
Marsh St. John’s Wort	<i>Triadenum fraseri</i>
Long-leaved Chickweed	<i>Stellaria logifolia</i>
Goldthread	<i>Coptis trifolia</i> , ssp. <i>groenlandica</i>



Pearly Everlasting  
One-flowered Wintergreen  
Blue-eyed Grass  
Cornel  
Wild Lily-of-the-Valley  
Spring Beauty  
Starflower  
Elderberry  
Strawberry  
Bluebead Lily  
Bluets  
Grove Sandwort

*Anaphalis margaritacea*  
*Moneses uniflora*  
*Sisyrinchium montanum*  
*Cornus Canadensis*  
*Maianthemum canadense*  
*Claytonia virginica*  
*Trientalis borealis*  
*Sambucus racemosa*  
*Fragaria virginiana*  
*Clintonia borealis*  
*Houstonia caerulea*  
*Arenaria lateriflora*

### CAPE SPLIT

– Jim Wolford and Patrick Kelly

**Date:** Saturday, May 30th  
**Place:** Cape Split, Blomidon  
**Weather:** Cool, foggy, heavy mist  
**Leader:** Patrick Kelly and Jim Wolford  
**Participants:** 15



This was a joint trip to Cape Split Provincial Park with the Blomidon Naturalists and HFN. We had perhaps 15 participants, with about half from Halifax or Metro (including Ingrid & Burkhard Plache, Charlie Cron, and Candice MacDonald). The weather was less than great, with fog and humidity and heavy mist in Wolfville, and then cool fog up on the North Mountain (but at least no rain!). Pat’s group ended up ahead of Jim’s group and were looking mostly at plants and birds, but they did notice some of the things in Jim’s detailed notes.

The walk started at 9:20 a.m. and Jim’s group had arrived at ‘the Split’ and fog at 1:05 p.m. where Patrick’s group had already eaten and were just starting back. After 20 minutes for lunch and a rest, Jim’s walk back to the cars ended at about 4:30 or so.

The high humidity was great in that it showed off the thousands of sheet webs from spiders of at least three kinds – the bowl-and-doily spider webs, the dome-shaped sheets on trailside shrubs, and the funnel-webs on the ground.

**Plants with flower-buds** were carpets of wild Lily-of-the-Valley, *Aralia* or Wild Sarsaparilla, *Clintonia* or Blue-bead Lily, Roseroot, and Red Elderberry.

**Plants in bloom** (overall the plants in bloom were really awesome, especially the Red Trilliums, which were everywhere and more abundant than ever) were Goldthread; Striped Maple; American Fly-honeysuckle; Red Trillium; Toothwort (two kinds, mostly *Dentaria diphylla*, but also some with 'cut' leaves of which some showed a white fungus growth on their undersides – rust? (hybrids with *D. laciniata* genes?)) (also some of the cut leaves showed rust); Spring Beauty (in carpets as usual, and, out in the brighter light of the afternoon, more of them were open on our walk); Dutchman's Breeches; several clumps of pale Red Trilliums but perhaps 10-15 white flowers with purplish centres of Red Trilliums; Rosy Twisted-stalk; Blue Violet; Small-flowered Crowfoot (a buttercup); Hobblebush (just one prostrate plant); Sedge (*Carex* sp.); Wood Rush (*Luzula*); common Dandelion; Dewberry (*Rubus*); Wild Strawberry; Alder (*Alnus crispa*); and Baneberry (probably Red-berried?).

**Herptiles** were two Red-backed Salamanders, each under their own log.

**Birds** – a drumming Ruffed Grouse was heard by Patrick's group and they also had great views of Black-and-White warblers as well as two Black-throated Green Warblers, a Red-eyed Vireo, and a male American Redstart. For Jim's group, there was a Black-throated Green warbler heard & seen; one Black-capped Chickadee seen; two male American Redstarts seen extremely well and closely, and singing at arm's length to the trail and to us on our way out; Raven(s) at the west end of trail in fog; the same for nesting Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls; any nesting Double-crested Cormorants were hidden by fog; a Black-throated Blue Warbler heard and seen on our way out; an *Empidonax* unidentified flycatcher seen by Burkhard and Jim (probably a least flycatcher?); and a Blue-headed Vireo and several Bluejays were heard at the west end of trail.

**Mammals** – Jim may have heard a single chipmunk; a Red Squirrel was heard; and there were lots of humans with their dogs along the popular trail. We saw the 'Uncommon Art' by Christine Waugh, on trunks and branches in two widely spaced sites, and we discovered signage for this on our way back toward Scots Bay (look for brochures, maps, and online promos throughout the Valley). When Patrick's group first encountered the art, it was initially thought to be a weird fungus. It was white, about the size of a fist and appeared to have a Dairy Queen soft cone shape on the top. It looked to be growing from the cut end of a tree that had been removed as part of the damage from Hurricane Arthur. On closer examination (tapping) it was noted to be quite hard and barely attached to the wood. The reason, as we found, was that it had a hole on one side and was hanging from a nail! Along the next section of trail we found numerous similar examples, often in colour. The signage was not there on our way in, but was in place on the way back. (Another piece of sculpture in this series is located, at the time of this writing, in Miner's Marsh in Kentville.)

Spotted as well was a Scots' Bay Bald Eagle nest along Huntley Road behind the Fire Hall/Community Centre. Someone had mentioned that there were two eaglets there; by the time I viewed the nest in the late afternoon, the eaglets were inactive. One eaglet was on the nest rim just below the perched, attending adult Eagle, and I could see only the top of the back of the second eaglet (both were dark-downed and only 1/3 or less grown).



## TOUR OF GRAND OAKS

– Burkhard Plache

**Date:** Saturday, June 13th

**Place:** Grand Lake, adjacent to Oakfield Park, HRM

**Weather:** Cloudy, with a slightly cool wind

**Leader:** Dr. David Andrews

**Participants:** 31



The following is a continuation of the Grand Oaks Field Trip in the Summer Issue, #159.

We left off with "We saw a Chinese Chestnut, *Castanea mollissima*, and some of his rhododendrons." David said he had a lot of trouble with rhododendron pests, apparently related to his *Euonymus* plantings. He had also planted Procer Oak, and he's discovered it and every other oak grows as fast as the Red Oaks (he didn't expect this to happen). Continuing on up the long driveway, we crossed a 'Bridal Path' at the top of the hill. There we saw a Saul's Oak, a Sycamore, and a Turkish Maple. David pointed out a Shagbark Hickory, which is a cross between Pecan and Hickory. There was a large maze of White Spruce and nearby a tri-coloured variant of Copper Beech. Even more trees were – Korean Fir, Contorted European Larch, Weeping Larch, a yellow cultivar of a Dawn Redwood, and a Catalpa, all set in his large, lush rolling green fields. Wisteria surrounded an old TV 'dish', and there were *Quercus Alba*, Serbian Spruce, and a hybrid of Burr Oak and Southern Live Oak for a hedge – 303 of them – planted in 1996. A Sitka Spruce's older, brittle needles rivalled the sharpness of Porcupine quills!

There was a White Chinese Oak, a wind-resistant Toothed Oak, *Quercus dentata*, and a Betty Magnolia. There were also wild plum trees, and both Northern and Southern Catalpa (Indian Bean Trees).

The variety of trees was amazing and went on and on – Kentucky Coffee Tree, a hybrid Catalpa, Chinese Catalpa, and Japanese Walnut whose flowers look like purple orchids; three Burr Oaks in a row which had to be staked in the beginning because of the wind, an American Elm, a Little-leaf Linden, a Protea, a Common Hackleberry, Ohio Buckeye (a cousin of the Horse Chestnut), Honeynut (relative of the Walnut), a 10-year old Liberty Elm (resistant to Dutch Elm disease), a Chinese Chestnut, a 13-year old Pecan (no nuts as yet), a Black Walnut, and three Amur Cork trees.

There was an area dedicated to spruce. Red Spruce are tall and slim like ballerinas, and there were Norway Spruce and others. There was a lime tree, persimmon trees, European Hornbeam (cousin of the Ironwood or Hop Hornbeam), Tulip Trees that sport beautiful flowers when in bloom, and Crab, Honey Crisp, and MacIntosh Apple Trees, among other types. More were *Quercus bicolor*, willows, laurels, a Boxelder (Manitoba Maple), then a Japanese Larch (*Larix* sp.), and White, Red, and Black Pines delineated one of the property lines.

In the garden round his home (which he defined as 'semi-rough') he had planted 30 types of rhododendrons obtained from a rhododendron society over 20 years ago, so they were quite a good size and very beautiful – one sported the heavenly scent of jasmine! There were many maples – amongst them Red, Norway, a Variegated Norway, and a Japanese. There were magnolias, and one variety had yellow blooms; it had been in flower for about three weeks. As said before, he tries to keep his garden around the house



semi-wild. We saw an absolutely immense Norway Spruce, and a London Plane tree (sycamore), which apparently is the most popular landscape tree on earth. We passed a Waterfall Tree (?), and his largest English Oak. There were also Columnar Oaks, Hazlenut Trees, and an Alaskan Cypress.

At this point we trudged down toward the lakeside to see his boathouse and his grandchildren's 'magic-land' – a very different microclimate than was found up around the house and interior property next to the road. Back up again, past the house, and by this time we were leaving the garden and going back towards the long entrance road/driveway. On the way we passed a very tall Columnar Oak, a Corkscrew Hazel, a *Ginkgo biloba*, a Silver Fir, and an Alaska/Nootka Weeping Cypress (a very hardy tree). There was also a Pin Oak there which he had planted 20 years ago and which was now about 30 feet high.

There was a Ruby Chestnut which when in flower sports red 'candles' (the flowers) rather than the usual white. There was also a White Chestnut (planted from seed), white roses, Goldbarb Japanese Cherry, Weeping White Pine, a Pearl Bush in bloom, and purple lilacs; also rhodora, another Ironwood, a Russian Salt Tree, a yellow weigela, Carpathian Birch, a beautiful Deutzia, and a Seiboldi Magnolia!

A truly impressive array of trees and shrubs – and, what a lot of work to plant so many. Thank you David, for sharing your wonderful plantings, gardens and property.

## CHARLIE'S LAKE TRAIL

**Date:** Saturday, June 18th

**Place:** Kearney Lake

**Weather:** Scattered clouds, mid-twenties

**Leader:** Peter Webster

**Participants:** 14

– Peter Webster

Saturday July 18th began with a lovely morning and high scattered clouds with a temperature in the mid-twenties. The Halifax Field Naturalists' Charlie's Lake Trail walk was scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. on land managed by the Maskwa Aquatic Club on the shores of Kearney lake, on the western edge of Halifax. It would then move into an eastern portion of the Blue Mountain/Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area and its proposed regional park which covers a beautiful and diverse area of softwood, mixed forest, wetlands, stone ridges, and hilltop views.

But first we had to get to the trail head at the Maskwa Aquatic Club parking lot. Unknown to us, the Aquatic Club was hosting one of its largest regattas of the season. The normally quiet parking lot was full – and bustling with activity. Young paddlers and their families were arriving. Traffic was being marshalled by long-suffering, good-natured Maskwa volunteers; cars were parked for nearly a kilometre along the access road.

Nonetheless, 14 HFN participants made their way through the confusion to join me for this excellent hike. A little extra time was needed for the HFN group to find one another, find distant parking, and make an extra long walk to the trail head. Thankfully, the walk participants took this mix-up, and the extra walk, with good humour.

We began by passing through relatively young spruce

and maple forest with several boggy areas. The trail then climbed up and over several rock ridges of Greywack siltstone; these ridges are a key feature of the area. This ancient sedimentary rock is part of what is called the Goldenville rock formation which runs across the centre of Nova Scotia. This rock, from deep in the earth's crust, was folded upward into high ridges by the powerful forces of our continent coming together with the African continent. The ridges which remain are only the remnants of the original mountains which were here. The sedimentary layers, turned on end, are clearly visible. The rock is also broken up from side to side and heavily water rounded. Scratches and gouges in the stone can also be seen in many places; this is evidence of the powerful action the glaciers also had on this landscape.

The trail is steep and rocky in several spots as it climbs steadily. Our destination, Charlie's Lake, sits more than 50 metres higher in elevation than Kearney Lake. We travelled on well-used trails, somewhat upgraded by volunteers. Trail work includes several walkways over wetter sections, and a long stairway down from the steep ridge. These trails have recently been reviewed with the participation of the North West Trails Association. I understand that a trail plan for the proposed park is nearing completion.

Much of the area was working land – used for logging, saw milling, and possibly quarrying – going back into the 1800s. The land was managed by a logging company until the 1980s. Old roads and other signs of use can be seen.

As we made our way we noted the remains of this past spring's Lady's Slippers, and a variety of mushrooms were beginning to make their presence known. With the help of knowledgeable naturalist Clarence Stevens, we identified wild edibles and bird songs. In boggy areas tracks of Deer, Coyote, and other animals could be seen, particularly in places less-frequented by dogs. Having made our way over several heights, we began to move into more mixed forest where maple, birch, and oak trees have taken over from spruce. Our walk carried on to the point where the sedimentary stone outcrops suddenly change over to the granite rock formations which the Birch Cove/Blue Mountain area is known for. As time for lunch neared, we made our way to the shore of Charlie's Lake.

The Eastern side of Charlie's Lake is dominated by a massive, sloping stone wall. This long narrow plateau is exciting to explore. It provides an impressive and beautiful view of the lake and the forest which surrounds it. Areas of marsh plants occupy several parts of the lake. Rhodora, Bog Laurel, and berry bushes cover the lake's rocky edge.

Here we took in the the beautiful scenery and enjoyed our lunch. On our return we carried on north along the ridge which cuts Charlie's lake off from Kearney Lake below. We climbed another steep 50 feet, and followed the rough and narrow trail, taking in great views from the slopes wherever an opening in the summer foliage permitted. At the end of this ridge, a recently built stairway allowed us to safely make the steep ascent. We completed our walk through the spruce forest alongside Kearney Lake before taking the extra stroll along the road to retrieve our cars.

Despite some confusion at the start, I hope everyone enjoyed this walk, a look at a very special part of the Halifax area, and an important corner of the Birch Cove Lakes/Blue Mountain Wilderness Area.



## EARTH WALK

– Molly LeBlanc

**Date:** Saturday August 29th

**Place:** The Adventure Earth Centre, near Dingle Tower

**Weather:** Sunny, warm

**Interpreter:** Molly LeBlanc

**Participants:** 6



Molly LeBlanc hosted the guided walk around the beautiful forested areas of Sir Sanford Fleming park beginning with a tour of The Adventure Earth Centre (AEC); a small Halifax Recreation Centre on Park Hill Drive, near the Dingle Tower. Molly has worked at the AEC for over ten years and she shared an overview of the building's history and the organisation's current work.

Since it was established in 1981 by George Taylor and Allan Warner, the AEC has run experiential programmes which focus on earth education. It currently holds summer camps for children aged 7-9 or 10-12, overnight camps for ages 10-12 and 11-13 and 13-15, and has a very active youth leadership programme as well as a year-round, all-ages community group called Helping the Earth by Acting Together (HEAT). All of the programmes teach the wonders which nature has to offer through hands-on, experiential learning.

The Halifax Field Naturalists got a taste of what the campers themselves may experience. They used magnifying glasses to see the world through the eye of a cricket; they used their noses to smell the various aromas of the forest; and they used their fingertips on a scavenger hunt that led them through the different prickly, smooth, slimy, and soft touches in the woods. They also saw that the colours of the forest are more than just green and brown as they worked to match colourful gems to the colours of nature around them. This idea of experiencing the environment using all of your senses, and by doing so creating a memorable and long-lasting connection to nature, is what the Adventure Earth Centre strives to do for every one of its participants. It is thought that the children and adults that come through the AEC will then carry with them these memories, and later become advocates and stewards of the natural world.

For more information about the AEC, you can drop in for a visit or check out their website at [www.halifax.ca/rec/CentresAec.php](http://www.halifax.ca/rec/CentresAec.php).

## HEMLOCK HILL

– Karen McKendry; Grace and Richard Beazley

**Date:** Saturday, July 25th

**Place:** St. Mary's River, Hemlock Hill, nr. Sherbrooke

**Weather:** Light overcast skies, 18°C

**Leader:** Karen McKendry

**Participants:** 27



On Saturday July 25th, 27 adventurous folks made their way into the old growth Hemlock and floodplain forest on the Nature Trust's newly protected and beautiful Hemlock Hill Conservation Lands north of the town of Sherbrooke in Guysborough County. It was moderately

challenging in places for sure! Once in the old growth forest, they stood in awe of the towering trees, including of course, the Eastern Hemlock. They also examined the tiny, old growth forest indicator, Coral Lichen.

Red Oak was seen, and also, while bushwacking through the denser parts, Speckled Alder. Quite a number of ferns were observed as well – Interrupted, New York, Cinnamon, Beech, and Hay-scented – plus more that were not identified.

Participants had a great time exploring and learning about the St. Mary's River and about the wildlife that call the river home. The river and surrounding area provides important habitat for the Wood Turtle and many bird species – including the Canada Warbler, Oliveside Flycatcher, and Barn Swallow – all species at risk of extinction in Canada. The river is also an important waterway for the endangered Atlantic Salmon.

Our thanks to guest forest ecologist Bob Guscott for interpreting the forest for us, and to all of the supporters who helped to secure the future of this special place!

Take a look at NSNT's Facebook photo album from the event and watch for upcoming campaign news.

## NATURE NOTES



– Molly LeBlanc

### SEPTEMBER

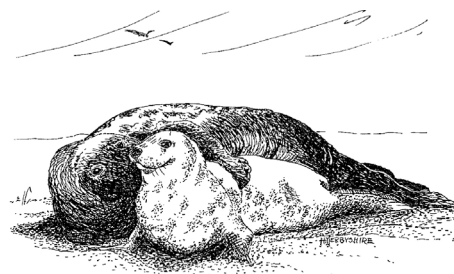
Judy Keating saw a **seal** swimming in East Ship Harbour and a **huge doe** and a **small fawn** in her yard, and Bobby Wilson wondered what type of **insects** had recently hatched which she had observed. They were small, black, and in the hundreds – caught in every spider web she saw.

Dennis Hipper saw **Ring-billed Gulls** catching flying ants in Cole Harbour. He has spotted only two Crane Flies when usually there are lots, but he *has* noticed **lots of bumblebees**.

Wendy McDonald saw a **Monarch caterpillar** on milkweed in Bedford two weeks ago, while David Patriquin saw a **groundnut** with vines and a beautiful flower on a hike at Duncan's Cove along a metal fence. They are not native to the Atlantic Coast.

Regina Maass saw **hummingbirds** at her raspberry bushes. She also saw a very tiny, **sick looking, brown mouse**.

People have noticed that most hummingbirds seem to have disappeared in the past two weeks. Although some people have seen females but not males for the past week, Bob McDonald said this is around the time they migrate, except for where it is warmer around the Northumberland Strait.





# HALIFAX TIDE TABLE



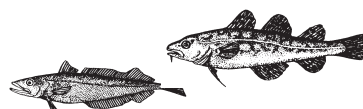
## October-octobre

## November-novembre

## December-décembre

Day	Time	Metres	jour	heure	mètres	Day	Time	Metres	jour	heure	mètres	Day	Time	Metres	jour	heure	mètres
<b>1</b>	0419	0.1	<b>16</b>	0335	0.5	<b>1</b>	0602	0.5	<b>16</b>	0451	0.6	<b>1</b>	0633	0.6	<b>16</b>	0537	0.6
	1002	2.0		0940	1.8		1115	1.8		1033	1.8		1140	1.7		1104	1.8
TH	1659	0.0	FR	1610	0.3	SU	1828	0.3	MO	1727	0.3	TU	1845	0.4	WE	1803	0.3
JE	2232	1.8	VE	2213	1.7	DI	2355	1.7	LU	2315	1.7	MA			ME	2346	1.7
<b>2</b>	0519	0.2	<b>17</b>	0414	0.6	<b>2</b>	0703	0.6	<b>17</b>	0550	0.7	<b>2</b>	0020	1.7	<b>17</b>	0638	0.5
	1049	1.9		1015	1.7		1205	1.7		1117	1.7		0729	0.6		1153	1.7
FR	1757	0.1	SA	1654	0.4	MO	1924	0.4	TU	1821	0.4	WE	1231	1.6	TH	1857	0.3
VE	2322	1.7	SA	2250	1.6	LU			MA			ME	1934	0.5	JE		
<b>3</b>	0622	0.4	<b>18</b>	0502	0.6	<b>3</b>	0048	1.6	<b>18</b>	0001	1.7	<b>3</b>	0111	1.7	<b>18</b>	0035	1.7
	1138	1.8		1054	1.7		0803	0.6		0652	0.7		0823	0.7		0738	0.5
SA	1857	0.2	SU	1745	0.4	TU	1300	1.6	WE	1206	1.7	TH	1327	1.5	FR	1248	1.7
SA			DI	2331	1.6	MA	2018	0.5	ME	1917	0.4	JE	2023	0.6	VE	1953	0.3
<b>4</b>	0014	1.6	<b>19</b>	0602	0.7	<b>4</b>	0148	1.6	<b>19</b>	0053	1.7	<b>4</b>	0208	1.6	<b>19</b>	0130	1.7
	0725	0.5		1136	1.7		0859	0.6		0753	0.6		0915	0.6		0838	0.4
SU	1230	1.7	MO	1841	0.5	WE	1405	1.5	TH	1303	1.7	FR	1430	1.5	SA	1352	1.6
DI	1955	0.3	LU			ME	2111	0.5	JE	2013	0.4	VE	2111	0.6	SA	2051	0.4
<b>5</b>	0111	1.6	<b>20</b>	0017	1.6	<b>5</b>	0256	1.6	<b>20</b>	0153	1.7	<b>5</b>	0309	1.6	<b>20</b>	0231	1.7
	0827	0.5		0706	0.7		0955	0.6		0853	0.5		1005	0.6		0938	0.3
MO	1328	1.6	TU	1224	1.7	TH	1517	1.5	FR	1410	1.6	SA	1536	1.4	SU	1504	1.6
LU	2053	0.4	MA	1939	0.5	JE	2202	0.5	VE	2109	0.4	SA	2159	0.6	DI	2150	0.4
<b>6</b>	0219	1.5	<b>21</b>	0111	1.6	<b>6</b>	0401	1.6	<b>21</b>	0259	1.7	<b>6</b>	0406	1.6	<b>21</b>	0336	1.8
	0926	0.6		0808	0.7		1046	0.6		0953	0.4		1051	0.5		1038	0.2
TU	1439	1.5	WE	1322	1.7	FR	1623	1.5	SA	1525	1.6	SU	1637	1.5	MO	1617	1.6
MA	2149	0.4	ME	2037	0.4	VE	2252	0.5	SA	2206	0.3	DI	2248	0.6	LU	2250	0.4
<b>7</b>	0338	1.5	<b>22</b>	0217	1.6	<b>7</b>	0453	1.7	<b>22</b>	0403	1.8	<b>7</b>	0454	1.7	<b>22</b>	0438	1.8
	1024	0.6		0908	0.6		1133	0.5		1052	0.3		1134	0.5		1136	0.2
WE	1556	1.5	TH	1432	1.7	SA	1716	1.5	SU	1636	1.7	MO	1728	1.5	TU	1723	1.7
ME	2243	0.5	JE	2134	0.4	SA	2339	0.5	DI	2304	0.3	LU	2334	0.6	MA	2351	0.3
<b>8</b>	0444	1.6	<b>23</b>	0329	1.7	<b>8</b>	0537	1.7	<b>23</b>	0502	1.9	<b>8</b>	0536	1.7	<b>23</b>	0536	1.9
	1117	0.5		1008	0.5		1215	0.4		1151	0.2		1214	0.4		1233	0.1
TH	1659	1.6	FR	1548	1.7	SU	1802	1.6	MO	1739	1.7	TU	1814	1.5	WE	1821	1.7
JE	2334	0.4	VE	2230	0.3	DI			LU			MA			ME		
<b>9</b>	0533	1.7	<b>24</b>	0434	1.8	<b>9</b>	0020	0.5	<b>24</b>	0003	0.3	<b>9</b>	0017	0.6	<b>24</b>	0049	0.3
	1206	0.5		1108	0.4		0615	1.7		0556	2.0		0615	1.7		0630	1.9
FR	1748	1.6	SA	1657	1.8	MO	1251	0.4	TU	1247	0.1	WE	1253	0.3	TH	1327	0.1
VE			SA	2326	0.2	LU	1843	1.6	MA	1835	1.8	ME	1856	1.6	JE	1915	1.8
<b>10</b>	0020	0.4	<b>25</b>	0529	1.9	<b>10</b>	0057	0.5	<b>25</b>	0100	0.2	<b>10</b>	0058	0.5	<b>25</b>	0144	0.3
	0614	1.7		1206	0.2		0650	1.7		0648	2.0		0653	1.7		0722	1.9
SA	1247	0.4	SU	1756	1.8	TU	1325	0.3	WE	1342	0.0	TH	1332	0.2	FR	1417	0.1
SA	1830	1.7	DI			MA	1923	1.6	ME	1929	1.8	JE	1936	1.6	VE	2006	1.8
<b>11</b>	0100	0.4	<b>26</b>	0022	0.2	<b>11</b>	0131	0.5	<b>26</b>	0156	0.2	<b>11</b>	0138	0.5	<b>26</b>	0237	0.4
	0651	1.7		0621	2.0		0725	1.7		0739	2.0		0731	1.8		0811	1.9
SU	1323	0.4	MO	1303	0.1	WE	1359	0.2	TH	1434	0.0	FR	1412	0.2	SA	1505	0.1
DI	1910	1.7	LU	1851	1.9	ME	2001	1.6	JE	2021	1.9	VE	2016	1.7	SA	2054	1.8
<b>12</b>	0135	0.4	<b>27</b>	0117	0.1	<b>12</b>	0204	0.5	<b>27</b>	0251	0.3	<b>12</b>	0218	0.5	<b>27</b>	0327	0.4
	0726	1.7		0711	2.1		0759	1.8		0829	2.0		0811	1.8		0859	1.9
MO	1355	0.3	TU	1357	0.0	TH	1434	0.2	FR	1524	0.0	SA	1453	0.2	SU	1551	0.2
LU	1948	1.7	MA	1944	1.9	JE	2039	1.7	VE	2111	1.9	SA	2055	1.7	DI	2140	1.8
<b>13</b>	0204	0.4	<b>28</b>	0211	0.1	<b>13</b>	0239	0.5	<b>28</b>	0345	0.4	<b>13</b>	0301	0.5	<b>28</b>	0416	0.5
	0759	1.7		0800	2.1		0835	1.8		0917	1.9		0852	1.8		0945	1.9
TU	1426	0.3	WE	1451	-0.1	FR	1512	0.2	SA	1614	0.1	SU	1536	0.2	MO	1635	0.3
MA	2025	1.7	ME	2036	1.9	VE	2116	1.7	SA	2159	1.8	DI	2136	1.7	LU	2223	1.8
<b>14</b>	0232	0.4	<b>29</b>	0305	0.2	<b>14</b>	0317	0.5	<b>29</b>	0440	0.5	<b>14</b>	0347	0.5	<b>29</b>	0505	0.6
	0832	1.8		0850	2.1		0913	1.8		1005	1.9		0934	1.8		1029	1.8
WE	1457	0.3	TH	1544	0.0	SA	1552	0.2	SU	1705	0.2	MO	1622	0.2	TU	1718	0.4
ME	2101	1.7	JE	2126	1.9	SA	2154	1.7	DI	2246	1.8	LU	2217	1.7	MA	2305	1.8
<b>15</b>	0302	0.5	<b>30</b>	0401	0.3	<b>15</b>	0400	0.6	<b>30</b>	0537	0.5	<b>15</b>	0439	0.5	<b>30</b>	0554	0.6
	0905	1.8		0938	2.0		0952	1.8		1052	1.8		1018	1.8		1114	1.7
TH	1532	0.3	FR	1637	0.1	SU	1637	0.3	MO	1755	0.3	TU	1710	0.2	WE	1759	0.4
JE	2137	1.7	VE	2216	1.8	DI	2233	1.7	LU	2332	1.8	MA	2300	1.7	ME	2348	1.8
<b>31</b>			<b>31</b>	0500	0.4							<b>31</b>			<b>31</b>	0645	0.6
				1026	1.9											1159	1.6
			SA	1732	0.2										TH	1842	0.5
			SA	2305	1.8										JE		

**ALL TIMES  
ARE AST**







### **NEXT DEADLINE**

**21st of November for the December 2015 Issue**  
**Send submissions to 'Newsletter', c/o NS Museum of Natural History,**  
**or by email to [sdhaythorn@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:sdhaythorn@ns.sympatico.ca)**





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A History of the Halifax Field Naturalists  
as recorded in the pages of the  
**HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST**

## **FIRST DECADE (by Doris Butters)**

Part 1 History                      Issue No. 80, pp 4-7

Part 2 Community Projects   Issue No. 82, pp 6-9

## **SECOND DECADE (by Ursula Grigg)**

Part 1 People/Activities   Issue No. 84, pp 6-7

Part 2 People/Activities   Issue No. 87, pp 8-9

## **THIRD DECADE (by Stephanie Robertson)**

Part I 1995-1997   Issue No. 118, pp 18-20

Part II 1998-2001   Issue No. 119, pp 12-15

Part III 2002-2005   Issue No. 120, pp 10-12

## **30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

Members' Reminiscences   Issue No. 122, pp 9-16

Issue No. 123, pp 6-7

## **FOURTH DECADE**

Part I 2005-2007   Issue No. 157, pp 8-12 (by U. Grigg and S. Robertson)

2007-2010   Issue No. 158, pp 8-12 (by S. Robertson)











