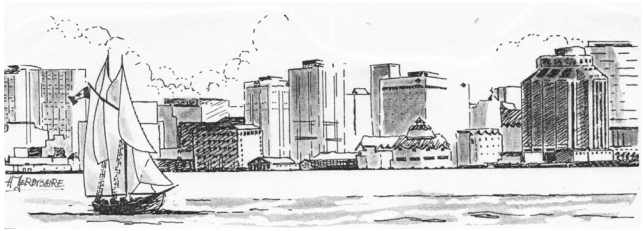
THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST

No. 150
March to May, 2013

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 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 in Nova Scotia. **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 quarterly **HFN Newsletter** and **HFN Programme**, and new memberships received from September 1st to December 31st of any year are valid until the end of the following membership year. The regular membership year is from January 1st to December 31st.



HFN ADDRESS
Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Hfx, N.S., B3H 3A6 **Email: hfninfo@yahoo.ca**
Website: halifaxfieldnaturalists.ca

NNS ADDRESS
Nature Nova Scotia, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6
Email: doug@fundymud.com (Doug Linzey, NNS Secretary and Newsletter Editor) **Website: naturens.ca**

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GRAPHICS All uncredited illustrations are by H. Derbyshire or from copyright-free sources. **Front Cover** - Pin Cherry,Bob McDonald; **Back Cover** -Rhodora, Bob McDonald (yes, hidden - can't be helped); **Tide Table** - Canadian Hydrographic Service, Fisheries & Oceans

HFN NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITORIAL

Sadly, on Friday, January 25th, our much-loved Life Member Doris Butters passed away at Northwood Continuous Care. Doris was on the Newsletter Committee from the Winter of 1978 to the Spring of 1980. She also joined the Board of Directors in January of that year, leaving her newsletter duties in December. She remained a director while rejoining the Newsletter Staff once more in January, 1982, becoming Co-President with John vanderMeer in May. In December she ably assumed sole Presidency and also became Newsletter Editor and sole Newsletter Production Editor as well!

Doris resigned the Presidency in December, 1983, but stayed on as Editor and Production Editor until the Summer of 1989, when Ursula Grigg took the helm as Editor (while I took over production). She enthusiastically continued to attend hikes and meetings until the hikes became too difficult, and the meetings too late for her.

Doris was a devoted and long time 'HFNer', and an enthusiastic, cheerful, and energetic naturalist. Her wonderfully positive and happy personality has been sorely missed since the time when she could no longer attend our meetings and outings. (*For more on Doris's extraordinary life, please see p. 8.*)

PAST HFN PRESIDENTS

We thought it might be of some interest to share our list of presidents since HFN's inception in 1975. The following has been compiled from information supplied by Richard Beazley, Bob McDonald, Bernice Moores, and Stephanie Robertson:

Paul Keddy – 1975 to 1977 (HFN was organised during the period October 21st, 1975 to January 22nd, 1977.)

Heather Harbord – 1977 to 1978 (elected at HFN's first AGM on January 22nd, 1977. Heather presided over HFN's first Executive Committee Meeting at 8:30 p.m. the same evening.)

Joe Harvey – 1978 to 1980
Anne Greene – 1980 to 1982
Doris Butters – Co-President 1982 (part year only)
John vanderMeer – Co-President 1982 (part only)
Doris Butters – 1982 to 1983
John vanderMeer – 1984 to 1985
Michael Downing – 1986 to 1991 (part year only)
Colin Stewart – 1991 (part year only) to 1994
Roy John – 1994 to 1996 (part year only)
Stephanie Robertson – 1996 (part year only) to 1997
Peter Payzant – 1997 to 1999
Ursula Grigg – 1999 to 2001
Bob McDonald – 2001 to 2004
Elliot Hayes – 2004 to 2005 (part year only)
Bernice Moores – 2004 to 2005 (part year only)
Allan Robertson – 2005 (part year only) to 2009
David Patriquin – 2009 to 2011 (part year only)
Janet Dalton – 2011 (part year only) to –

12% BY 2015

On February 28th, the provincial Departments of Environment and Natural Resources outlined a proposed plan to add to and expand existing parks, wilderness areas, and nature reserves, which will bring our protected spaces to 13% of Nova Scotia's land area. You can read more at **http://www.novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas/**, and also view the full proposal at **http://www.novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas/**. The site's mapping capability allows you not only to explore the province, but also to check out the areas that are proposed.

This plan is strengthened by many other government and non-government conservation efforts, including: the Natural Resources Strategy; the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act; the Climate Change Action Plan; the Renewable Electricity Plan; the Draft Coastal Strategy; and the Heritage Strategy.

With these changes, the proposed parks and protected areas system would include: 187 provincial parks; 84 wilderness areas; and 142 nature reserves (see "Conservation", p. 4).

Feedback – once again, we welcome your feedback on this proposed plan. You may give comments three ways: **In Person** – your participation is welcome at any of the upcoming provincial public information sessions. **HRM's is on April 9th**, at Pier 21, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., and also from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. **Online** – written comments and submissions are also welcome online at **www.novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas**. **In Writing** – written comments and submissions are also welcome by regular mail to:

Parks and Protected Areas Plan, Nova Scotia Environment, PO Box 442, Halifax, NS B3J 2R7.

! All comments must be received by May 1st, 2013 !

NEW AND RETURNING

Melissa Douglas
Brian Ferguson
Sharon Russell
Edith Ward

SPECIAL REPORTS

YEAR-END REPORTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is the time we thank our volunteers for the excellent work they have done in the past year.

In 2012 we had 20 volunteers who ran everything from organising talks, walks, refreshments for our meetings; editing and seeing to the publishing and delivery of the newsletter, bill paying and banking, as well as keeping up to date records of the membership. Thank you to all the volunteers.

Each year there are volunteers who wish to step down for a well-earned break; this year we are losing six people. They are Treasurer Doris Balch; Secretary Richard Beazley; Board Member Grace Beazley; Programme Chair Jim Medill (Richard and Grace will co-chair it); and the CSCA Committee's Pat Leader and Bernice Moores, who have contributed for many years. Thank you for jobs so well done.

– Janet Dalton

CONSERVATION

The Committee has been involved, either as a group or individually, on a number of issues during the past year. These include but are not limited to:

Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) Regional Park: Many HFN members attended the HRM staff presentation on May 31st which described a Grand Vision for an enlarged Regional Park. There has been no follow-up to date as HRM received a letter from the legal firm representing the private landowners which derailed the process of going before Council and presentation of the grand vision for the Regional Park. Of note is the release of the Watershed Study to be presented on March 6th, 2013, which will help inform next steps on delineation of the Regional Park boundaries and land acquisition plans.

Our HRM Alliance is a collection of over 40 community and business associations participating in the HRM Regional Plan Review (RP+5) to make HRM a healthier and more liveable 'community of communities'. We have participated in public workshops and events to encourage and shape the '7 Solutions', including greenbelting, protecting water resources, and a commitment to measuring success; for more information go to **http://www.OurHRMAlliance.ca/"www.OurHRMAlliance.ca**.

Urban Forest Master Plan: Several HFN members participated in this study, including field trips and workshops to inform next steps. A weighty report, it delineates the serviced area of HRM into Ten Communities and 111 distinct Neighbourhoods, defined by land use, canopy cover, and species of trees present or lacking, among other details. Next steps include encouraging stewardship and tree planting by volunteer groups; for more on this, go to **http://www.halifax.ca/RealPropertyPlanning/UFMP/documents/ADOPTEDUFMP.pdf**.

Buy Back The Mersey: In late July, a letter was sent to Premier Dexter on behalf of HFN in support of the 'Buy Back The Mersey' campaign – a movement calling for the purchase of lands owned by Bowater Mersey. Specifically, the letter called for the purchase and protection of one third of the St. Margaret's Bay District lands, with the remaining two thirds available for sustainable forestry and recreation. On December 10th, 2012, the government announced they had purchased all of the former Bowater holdings – 550,000 acres valued at $117.7 million – for $1.00. During this announcement, the government put out a call for expressions of interest for community forests. Submissions were due by January 31st, 2013. According the Department of Natural Resources website, seven groups submitted proposals, from St. Margaret's Bay to Digby. They also are exploring opportunities for a Mi'kmaq forest initiative with the Assembly of Mi'kmaq Chiefs. Community forests are places for commercial forestry, tourism, recreation, habitat protection, environmental education, and research. Municipalities, forestry businesses, wood co-operatives, non-profit organisations, and other community-based groups can all manage the forests on leased Crown land. HFN chose to sign on as a supporter of the St. Margaret's Bay (SMB) Community Forest Initiative, the brainchild of the SMB Stewardship Association; more on this to be forthcoming.

Regional Planning: Several HFN members have participated in 'Open House' events, giving input to consideration for open-space Planning, riparian buffer zones, regional and neighbourhood parks, and other green spaces. The process is ongoing, with more opportunities to participate in the spring.

12% by 2015: The Province has committed to protecting 12% of the land mass of Nova Scotia by 2015. Our committee is gearing up to provide input during the second and final round of public consultation on the process. Broad provincial consultation on the proposed protected areas plan was announced (on February 28th, see below!). A submission to the first round was prepared on behalf of HFN (and by individual members) last year, when the public was asked to review and comment on areas of interest in the over 200,000 ha of land the province put forward for consideration.

According to the Protected Areas Branch website, there will be many chances to provide comment, including community sessions, write-in opportunities, and in-person meetings (April 9th at Pier 21). During these sessions people will be able to look at maps of proposed areas, ask questions, and confirm that their views are heard and considered. This is the stage where people can share their support or concern for individual areas, and also the time to identify how proposed boundaries could be changed to reduce conflict, or enhance protection or public enjoyment. As a result of this step, government will create the final protected areas plan.

!!Stop Press!!: On February 28th, the provincial Departments of Environment and Natural Resources

announced a major joint proposal to establish four new provincial parks, 44 new wilderness areas, and 120 new nature reserves – many fronting on our inland waterways and on our coast – as another important step in the '12 % by 2015' initiative. In fact, if all the proposals are approved, the proportion of protected land base in N.S. will exceed this legislated target and will be over 13% instead. Moreover, many existing provincial parks, wilderness areas, and nature reserves will be expanded. On the other hand, some existing provincial park reserves would revert to being regular Crown Land, and other properties, formerly considered for protection, have been dropped. Some of the proposed designations, including those on the former Bowater Mersey Paper Company lands and several with significant mining potential, need to undergo another review. Overall, the proposal is superb, although some of the boundaries may need a bit of tweaking. We hope that as many people as possible will review the massive proposal and submit either general or site-specific comments. An amazing interactive map of the entire province, chockfull with information, is available at **http://www.novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas/plan/interactivemap**. A list of the proposed new protected lands plus contact information for comments can be found at **http://www.novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas**.

! All comments must be received by May 1st, 2013 !

A number of hikes have been organised into lands at risk of development; this supports our Conservation Committee's mandate. The most noteworthy example is the William's Lake Lands. This area is threatened by the proposed extension of sewer and water lines in Purcell's Cove, at major expense to current adjacent landowners presently well-served by wells and septic systems.

In collaboration with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, HFN continues to monitor the Purcell's Cove Conservation Lands. Currently, these are the only formally protected lands in the Purcell's Road Backlands (of which Williams Lake Lands are a part). An updated species list is posted on our website at **http://halifaxfieldnaturalists.ca/arnell/inventory2012/PCCLinventory2012.pdf**.

– Bob McDonald, Dave Patriquin, Clare Robinson

COLIN STEWART CONSERVATION AWARD

As we are reminded quarterly in the Halifax Field Naturalist, HFN has two main objectives: to encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history; and to represent the interests of naturalists by encouraging the conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources.

HFN exists thanks to people like Colin Stewart, who was a driving force behind the club for much of its history. That second HFN objective defined Colin: he devoted his adult life to the cause of conservation in Nova Scotia. And we honour his memory by giving the annual Colin Stewart Conservation Award to others (individuals or groups) who share Colin's dedication to the HFN objectives.

Hope Swinimer is one of those people.

In choosing from nominated candidates, the award committee considers criteria that can be summed up thus: to recognise an individual or group who has made an outstanding contribution to conservation in Nova Scotia, characterised by undertaking and completing challenging conservation tasks of provincial significance, or by outstanding efforts over an extended period of time toward the completion of a conservation task of provincial significance.

Hope's particular mission is to care for the wildlife of Nova Scotia. Her "outstanding contribution" to conservation in the province has been consistent and growing over the last 15 years, since she first established the Hope for Wildlife Society, a non-profit organisation specialising in wildlife rehabilitation and education.

From the beginning, Hope has clearly been driven to improve the lot of wildlife in Nova Scotia. She's built a strong and growing organisation strictly on her own time. She has inspired many others to join her mission, and she doesn't appear about to stop.

Hope for Wildlife admirably fits the HFN objectives of appreciation, understanding, and conservation of natural values.

The Hope for Wildlife Society now includes bird and mammal nurseries, outdoor enclosures, birds-of-prey flight cages, a White-tailed Deer enclosure (the 'orFAWNage'!), a learning centre, an animal hospital, and a garden.

Hope for Wildlife is currently the largest such facility in Nova Scotia, receiving injured and orphaned wildlife from all over the province. The society takes more than 10,000 phone calls annually and offers advice on humane solutions to wildlife conflicts, advises what to do when an injured or orphaned animal is found, and dispatches volunteers to pick up injured animals. It annually takes in more than 1,500 animals, of which about 70 percent are released back into the wild.

Certainly, one of the most famous residents was Ralph the pelican, successfully rescued, rehabilitated, and returned to its native habitat.

The society gives tours and lectures both on- and offsite, to schools, community groups, and seniors. Programmes include group presentations, full-day lectures for students and professionals, one-week day camps (for children and youth), tours, and presentations for families. In the summer, the learning centre and garden are open to the public to learn about wildlife and how to live in harmony with it. The society's medical facility is the first legally certified wildlife veterinary hospital in Nova Scotia.

The Hope for Wildlife television series can be seen on Oasis HD TV and the Knowledge Network.

Hope for Wildlife has a summer internship programme and relies on 75 volunteers. Sources of funds include donations, grants (corporate and government), community groups, and annual fundraisers.

Hope runs Hope for Wildlife from home on a volunteer basis. She is involved in all aspects: daily care; tours and talks; fundraising; answering public inquiries; pro-

Halifax Field Naturalists
Financial Statement (Balance Sheet)
As At December 31, 2012

	2012	2012	2011	2011	2010	2010
Assets						
Cash Bank of Montreal		$2,570		$1,872		$872
Accounts Receivable and Accrued Income		$645		$774		$1,033
Inventories and Prepaids		$568		$579		$719
Investments		$12,544		$12,544		$12,554
Fixed Assets						
		$16,327		$15,768		$15,168
Liabilities and Surplus						
Accounts Payable - General						
- NNS		$185		$195		$390
Surplus						
Restricted		$6,544		$6,544		$6,544
Unrestricted		$9,598		$9,029		$8,234
	$16,142		$15,573		$14,778	
		$16,327		$15,768		$15,1687

Halifax Field Naturalists
Statement of Income and Surplus
Year Ended December 31, 2012

	2012 Actual	2012 Budget	2011 Actual
Revenues			
Membership	**$2,600**	$2,500	$2,718
Product Sales	**$60**	$0	$0
GIC	**$0**	$0	$0
Interest	**$60**	$0	$51
Donations	**$0**	$0	$0
DF List	**$4**	$0	$0
	$2,724	$2,500	$2,769
Expenses			
Field Trips	**$0**	$25	$0
Special Projects	**$0**	$25	$64
Socials	**$0**	$80	$3
Grants/Donations (13 T-shirts)	**$0**	$200	$140
Insurance	**$100**	$200	$200
Meetings	**$633**	$100	$100
Memberships	**$190**	$450	$330
Internet Service	**$30**	$180	$174
Miscellaneous	**$0**	$0	$0
Newsletters Postage	**$411**	$540	$454
Production	**$779**	$650	$436
Office Supplies & Expenses	**$13**	$50	$74
	$2,155	$2,500	$1,974
Net Income	**$569**		$795
Surplus, beginning of year	**$9,029**		$8,234
Surplus, end of year	**$9,598**		$9,029

– Janet Dalton, Treasurer

curing food and supplies; recruiting and training volunteers; and managing finances. Oh yes – and she works full time as manager of a veterinary hospital!

To sum up: Hope Swinimer exhibits a true love of nature, which she demonstrates every day in a very positive and constructive manner, getting things done and inspiring others along the way. To contact or to visit HFWS: 5909 Hwy 207, Seaforth, N.S., B0J 1N0; 407-WILD (9453); **http://www.hopeforwildlife.net/**.

– Doug Linzey

MEMBERSHIP

In 2012 we experienced a small inrease in membership, moving from 107 to 109. The 2012 roll of 109 memberships was made up of 53 Individual, 32 Family, 20 Supporting, two Life, and two Student memberships.

In addition we had four dues-paying institutional members (all libraries). Fifty-four of our members also chose to join Nature Nova Scotia when joining or rejoining the HFN. This year the number of members who have provided us with their email addresses came in at 89, and we have been able to use this communication option to provide members with information on special events and opportunities to participate in public consultations. We have had some helpful feedback and welcome your comments at any time.

Once again thanks to Doug Linzey for maintaining the membership database and newsletter labels.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS BY YEAR

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
127	121	119	107	109

– Lillian Risley

PROGRAMME

The programme committee remained the same for 2012/13, with Elliott Hayes, Janet Dalton, Richard and Grace Beazley, Burkhard Plache, and myself as members. A big 'thank you' goes to the meeting presenters and field trip leaders who volunteered their time and shared their knowledge, the idea generators and organisers who do the behind-the-scenes work, and the recorders who write up presentations and field trips for HFN's newsletter.

We had a total of nine presentations, with four by HFN members sharing their nature experiences. Other talks by non-HFN members covered nature from butterflies to Coyotes, from climate change to tidal power generation, and from man-made ocean disasters to the natural recovery of river flood plains. Our field trips included joint trips with N.S. Nature Trust to Purcell's Cove and St. Mary's River, the N.S. Bird Society to watch seabirds, and the Blomidon Naturalists Society to Cape Split. Member-led paddling expeditions, hikes, snowshoeing, stargazing, and waterfalling helped round out a full calendar of field trips around Nova Scotia. A special thanks to Burkhard and Richard for their efforts in organising and leading many of the hikes we all enjoy.

– Jim Medill

NEWSLETTER

The four issues of The Halifax Field Naturalist from March 2012 to February 2013 (#146 - #149) comprised 60 pages of natural history articles, species lists, pictures, and nature notes. They included reports on ten HFN talks and ten HFN field trip write-ups. Thanks to everyone who submitted them, thereby adding to Nova Scotia's natural history records and observations.

The Spring Issue, #146, included a very important report by entomologist Christopher Majka "The BSLB Advances" *(p.8)* – about the government's continued waste of taxpayer's money 'chasing down' the Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle, freezing peoples' rights to use of their land, and still conducting sporadic searches and 'discoveries' without proper scientific studies to back up any necessity for them. This article is well worth re-reading to remind all of us what goes on 'behind the scenes' in our province at our expense.

The Fall Issue, #148, included a letter of thanks to HFN's Bob McDonald from the Musquodoboit Trailways Association – "A Thank You To HFN" *(p.3)* – for our letter of support to the Provincial Government on their behalf; it helped to win them one of 30 provincial grants for the development, upgrading, and restoration of their trails.

Our Winter (#149) Issue's Editorial was all about our editorial policy regarding punctuation, etymology, spelling, proofing, and deadlines, for any of you who were wondering or needed explanation about it *(p.3)*. There was also an extremely useful and informative report on the behaviour of our birds during fall migration – "2012 Fall Bird Migration" *(p.4)* – including the importance of feeders, some bird counts and rarities, and what to look for. There was also a winter-feeder forecast, and what to expect to see this spring. Thank you to our new Board Member, birder Clarence Stevens Jr.

The seasonal Tide Table, Nature Notes, and Pat Chalmers' factual and informative Almanac once again rounded out another year of The Halifax Field Naturalist. We trust these continue to be useful, interesting resources for our readers.

– Stephanie Robertson

DORIS E. (MATTHEWS) BUTTERS

The early 60's – waitressing at a coffee shop, ($21.00 per week, six-day week, Saturday a 12-hour day!) – a summer job while attending Dal. Fellow-waitress Mary had taken me home to meet her Mum Doris, who was typically throwing herself with happy enthusiasm into what she happened to be doing at that moment, preparing a meal for her family.

I thought no more of it until years later at one of Regine's post HFN meeting refreshment breaks. We soon realised our connections went back further than that first 20-year-back brief acquaintance; they went more than 60 years back and more than 4,000 miles across the Atlantic, to Foleshill Rd, Coventry, Warwickshire, my Dad's birthplace, where Doris had attended school with his younger brother, my Uncle Alan. I had

been recognising that this Doris Butters was a kindred spirit, exhibiting the same beliefs, the same intelligent, intense and curious outlook on life, the same dependable strength and happy personality under duress, the same constant kindly nature, and love of nature, that I knew so well in my Dad; no doubt for a goodly part born out of enduring constant devastating bombing, rationing, economic depression, and pre- and post-war bad times; essentially – revelling in the joy and luck of just being alive to appreciate and love our beautiful Earth. For them, life was an exciting adventure, and whatever was to come – bring it on!

Recently, to my intense delight, I was given the privilege of reading an extensive, endearing family history by Doris of her family, both when in Britain and when in Canada. Doris's husband John and my Dad were in the navy during the war; the RN and the RCN respectively. Both our families had lived in B.C. on the coasts at various times, both men had endured and seen terrible disasters at sea. Both extended families had also experienced the ordinary deaths (back then) from things such as factory accidents, meningitis, TB, and diphtheria. There to read about were the same workplaces, the same streets, the same areas.

Doris learned to read when she was very young, before she went to school. She read everything she could, all her life. Her Dad was a tool and dye maker who loved nature, teaching his daughter about plants when they went for frequent walks in the beautiful English countryside. When older, Doris had trained as a secretary (which stood her in good stead later for all the different newsletters she produced for various organisations, including HFN). But when World War II began everyone volunteered to do whatever needed to be done. Her father was a fire spotter, her sister volunteered for the fire brigade, and she for first aid. The first bombs that fell on Britain fell (virtually) in their backyard. She remembers seeing the three bombs falling. After that there were regular bombings all the time.

After the war ended Doris, John, Mary, and John Jr. emigrated to Vancouver where John worked for the Pacific Oceanographic Research Centre for ten years. They lived on Eagle Island, 100 yards from shore, in a house with a wood and coal burning stove. "You had to use a row boat to go back and forth," said Doris. "Only four families lived on Eagle Island year round. It was a wonderful place for our kids to grow up." John and Doris raised six children – Mary, John, Elizabeth, Lesley-Jane, Michael, and Timothy. In 1962, they moved to Halifax when John was transferred to BIO. Doris worked at Dalhousie for 25 years and then "retired," to volunteer at the Natural History Museum – for another 27 years! She was also involved in the Heritage Trust. In all four roles, Doris contributed her writing, editing, and organising skills to create monthly newsletters. Doris and John were also involved with the Theatre Arts Guild (TAG) and built the Pond Playhouse. Doris spent many years creating costumes and serving as wardrobe mistress for TAG, and also for the St. Mary's University Drama Club.

Though Doris had lived on Eagle Island for ten years, she couldn't swim! At 60 she joined the Petrified Swimmers Class at the YWCA and became an avid swimmer, practising in the Waegwoltic pool, her favourite recreational place in Halifax. Also in her 60s Doris began travelling. Through family members and friends (Hilary Grant and Marjorie Dunbar) she spent the next 30 years travelling the world, keeping a well-crafted journal.

Things really changed after she had a stroke. But her happy, positive, and persevering nature saw her through. With good therapy and faithful daughter Lesley-Jane, Doris managed to come to several HFN presentations, the last being to our monthly meeting and Christmas Social on December 6th.

Doris had saved this short 1978 piece by Nadine Stair, aged 85, which accompanied four photographs of the same tree in the four seasons. Here is an exerpt:

"…If I had my life to live over, I'd dare to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax, I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been on this trip. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but less imaginary ones…", "…I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies."

We all miss you Doris; have fun on your new adventure!

– S. Robertson; Mary Spurr (Northwood Life March, 2012); Doris Butters, courtesy Lesley-Jane Butters

SPECIAL ARTICLES

SALAMANDERS IN CRISIS

– Matt Ellerbeck
Salamander Conservationist

– an Overview of Why Salamander Conservation is Needed; the Small-Mouthed Salamander, *Ambystoma texanum*.

Although they are rarely given much thought, and often overlooked when they are, salamanders are in a terrible crisis. Around half of all the world's salamander species are listed as threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These species are all facing a high risk of extinction. A further 62 species have been designated as near-threatened, with populations rapidly dwindling. This means they are quickly getting closer to threatened status and to the brink of extinction. Sadly, for some salamanders it is already too late, as both the Yunnan Lake Newt, *Cynops wolterstorffi*, and Ainsworth's Salamander, *Plethodon ainsworthi*, have already gone extinct.

Salamanders have been on the earth for over 160 million years, and the terrible state that they now find themselves in is due to the detrimental acts of humans. Even those species that are not experiencing population declines deserve attention and conservation to ensure that they remain healthy and stable.

One of the biggest issues affecting salamanders is the loss of their natural habitat. Many areas that were once suitable for salamanders have now been destroyed for developmental construction and agriculture; habitats of all kinds are being lost at an alarming rate. Wetlands are drained, forests are logged and cut down, and waterfronts are developed. Salamanders are literally losing their homes and they are losing them rapidly. And, the ongoing expansion of urban areas threatens the suitable habitats that still remain.

Where natural habitats do still exist, they are often fragmented or degraded. Fragmentation occurs when healthy areas of habitat are isolated from one another. These fragmented areas are known as habitat islands. Salamander populations are affected since gene flow between the populations is prevented. This increases the occurrence of inbreeding, which results in a decrease in genetic variability and the birthing of weaker individuals. Fragmented populations where inbreeding occurs often ends in a genetic bottleneck. This is an evolutionary event where a significant percentage of the population or species is killed or otherwise prevented from reproducing. Habitat fragmentation is also harmful because it often causes the elimination of crucial requirements in areas which are critical to the survival of salamander populations. Such areas include spaces that can be utilised for thermo-regulation, prey capture, breeding, and over-wintering. Without such habitat requirements populations dwindle.

Breeding sites, often in the form of vernal pools, are particularly important. The loss of such areas in the form of habitat destruction can negatively affect the entire population and its reproductive output. According to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), there is some evidence that certain salamander species have individuals that return to the very pond in which they were born once they reach maturity. Therefore, destruction of a breeding pond may result in loss of the entire population returning to that site. Habitat complexity is also important as it offers shelter to salamanders from both predators and human persecution.

Degradation occurs when the natural habitat has been altered and degraded to such a degree that it is unlikely that any remaining salamander species would be able to survive. Building developments and agriculture near fragmented habitats put salamanders at serious risk. As amphibians, salamanders have extremely absorbent skins. Industrial contaminants, the introduction of sedimentation into waterways, sewage run-off, pesticides, oils, and other chemicals and toxic substances from construction sites and human settlements can all be absorbed by salamanders. This can quickly lead to deaths. They can also cause widespread horrific deformities to occur. A study conducted at Purdue University found that out of 2,000 adult and juvenile salamanders, eight percent had visible deformities.

According to 'Save The Frogs', Atrazine (perhaps the most commonly used herbicide on the planet, with some 33 million kg being used annually in the U.S. alone) can reduce the survival of salamanders. Many products are sold with the claim that they are eco-friendly. However, these should be viewed with caution. For example, according to N.C Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Roundup and many other surfactant-loaded glyphosate formulations are not labelled for aquatic use. When these formulations are applied to upland sites according to label instructions, the risk to surfactant-sensitive species is considered low. While this may be the case for fish it does not necessarily apply to amphibians. Salamanders that breed in water also routinely use non-aquatic areas and could easily be exposed to glyphosate formulations that contain harmful surfactants through direct application and not just incidental drift.

Habitat destruction and degradation can also effect the availability of prey items, causing unnatural declines in appropriate food sources.

Habitats are often isolated and cut off from one another by the roads and highways that now run through them. Countless numbers of salamanders are killed on roads and highways every year when they are hit by vehicles. Those which are migrating to breeding and egg-laying sites often must cross over roads to reach such areas. Here many of the mature members of the breeding population are killed. Removing members of the breeding populations greatly limits reproductive output, and this makes it incredibly hard for salamander numbers to rebound.

Roads present an additional problem because they represent a form of habitat loss. The roads that run

through natural areas also fragment the existing populations, drastically making them smaller in size. This limits the gene flow and genetic diversity between the isolated populations on either side and this greatly increases the chances of extirpation. When salamanders attempt to cross roads to travel between populations or to critical breeding/birthing sites, it greatly increases their chances of being hit and killed by vehicles.

In the Wetlands Ecology and Management (2005) population projections for the Spotted Salamander, *Ambystoma maculatum,* life tables imply that an annual risk of road mortality for adults >10% can lead to local population extirpation. Unfortunately, it is estimated that mortality rates can often be as high as 50% to 100%, which means populations are at extreme risk of extirpation and extinction due to road mortality. Wyman (1991) reported average mortality rates of 50.3% to 100% for hundreds of salamanders attempting to cross a paved rural road in New York State. Given that this figure pertains to a rural area from over a decade ago, it is fair to assume that even higher mortality rates now occur as there has been an increase in cars and roads over the years. Reducing road mortality is paramount to preserving salamander species.

Being hit and killed by vehicles is not the only threat that roads create for salamanders. Chemical run-off from vehicles contaminate roadside ditches and pools. These sites are often utilised by salamanders for breeding and birthing. According to Steven P. Brady (2012) survival in roadside pools averaged just 56%, as compared to 87% in woodland pools. Thus, an average of 36% fewer individual embryos survived to hatching in roadside versus woodland waters.

Salamanders are also threatened when they are harvested from the wild. Salamanders are taken for the pet trade, for food markets (mudpuppies), and for use as fishing bait.

There is much about salamanders that scientists do not know. Aspects of the biology, ecology, and lifestyles of many species is a mystery. This undoubtedly means human interference is negatively affecting salamanders in ways in which we don't even know. The intricate relation between all species and the vital roles they play within eco-systems is also being altered. Such alterations can have serious consequences to not just salamanders, but many other animals as well (including humans). To find out how you can help go to: **www.savethesalamanders.com**.

HFN TALKS

SS *ATLANTIC* — 3 JAN.

– Gillian Webster

Halifax author, historian, and scuba diver Bob Chaulk gave a fascinating talk on the history of the vessel SS *Atlantic* and the factors that led the trans-Atlantic passenger ship to crash onto the rocks at Terence Bay, Nova Scotia, on April 1st, 1873, with a large loss of life. It turned into the worst nineteenth century marine disaster in Canada.

Bob started diving in 1988 and it is obviously one of his passions still. He went on to tell his audience of how he and his friend, Greg Cochkanoff, dove together recreationally for 25 years around Nova Scotia. They explored the wreck of SS *Atlantic* together many times, and the ship itself is mostly gone now, but large objects such as the boilers are still recognisable. Bob said wreckage can still be found at depths ranging from ten to 80 ft.

The two diving friends and fellow historians collaborated on a book titled SS *Atlantic:* The White Star Line's First Disaster at Sea, published in 2009 by Goose Lane Editions. The questions that the authors wanted to explore were "How does a large modern steam ship end up so woefully off course (ten miles off)?" and "How did the lookouts fail to see the shore onto which the ship crashed?"

SS *Atlantic* was one of the early iron-hulled screw (propeller-driven) steamers of the White Star Line. She was built at Belfast, Ireland in 1871. *Atlantic* was the second steam liner commissioned by White Star (Oceanic being the first, in 1870), but carried the notoriety of being the first White Star Line steamer to sink. The White Star Line was the same company that built *Titanic*, which sank 39 years later. However, at the time, *Atlantic* was considered a powerful and luxurious ship; 437 ft (128 metres) length (overall), 40.9 ft (approximately 12.5 metres) at the beam, and 32 ft (9.7 metres) depth, with two, two-cylinder compound engines together supplying 600 horsepower.

For about two years, SS *Atlantic* had made regularly scheduled trips between Liverpool and New York. She was built partly to take advantage of the large numbers of people emigrating in the 1870's, some of them fleeing from the famine in Ireland. On March 31st, 1873, the ship was ten days into a journey to New York. Ninety percent of the passengers were travelling steerage, as that was all they could afford. The steamship had met headwinds along the route, and so the four masts were no help in those conditions. The crew thought they did not have enough coal left to reach their destination, so, deciding to aim for Halifax Harbour, they changed course; this was to prove fatal for the vessel and most of her passengers and crew. Tragically, it was shown later that the ship *did* have enough coal to reach New York.

During the approach to Halifax on the evening of March 31st, Captain Williams was on the bridge until midnight with his third officer, Cornelius Brady. The captain then retired to sleep in his quarters. He asked to be brought a cup of cocoa two hours later so he could resume the bridge once the crew had spotted the Sambro Lighthouse. This Captain had never been to Halifax

before, and he thought it to be a large British port; he had studied the latest charts and knew that the big light house would be coming up on the port side.

The second officer, Henry Metcalf, and the fourth officer, John Brown, were left in charge of the bridge. They, in addition to four posted lookouts, were the only crew on deck. *Atlantic* proceeded confidently at about ten to 12 knots for the entrance of Halifax harbour, experiencing intermittent visibility, squalls, wind, and snow. However, at the inquest after the ship ran aground, the weather was proved to be clear and calm enough, therefore the weather was *not* considered a factor in the ship wrecking itself on the rocks at Terence Bay.

At the time, the captain and crew did not know *Atlantic* was approximately ten miles off-course to the west of Halifax Harbour. It came out at the inquest that officers failed to take any lead soundings, did not post a masthead lookout, did not reduce speed, nor wake the captain, as they approached the unfamiliar coast. The crew somehow did not spot the all-important Sambro Lighthouse, the large lighthouse to the west of the harbour entrance. So, the crew went on at full speed, believing they were still at sea far from Halifax; this might have been a factor as to why the deck officers refused the steward's offer to wake the captain as requested.

The chilling conclusions of the coroner censured the captain for neglect, specifically citing the speed as being much too fast, especially for a captain aiming for a port he'd never been to, and in the dark, leaving two officers in charge! It was determined too, that the Devil's Island Lighthouse keeper could see the Sambro Lighthouse clearly that night, and from the ship's course, at least one of the crew must have seen it as well. All crew denied it, but it was reported that at least one member said he might have seen something.

Later accounts quoted Quartermaster Charles Reynolds and passenger Patrick Reilly saying that they suddenly saw rocks on their starboard side, and roared out "Breakers ahead!" The ship was instantly turned hard to the right, but instead of heading into open sea as expected, she dashed herself full speed against an underwater rock called Marr's Head. Particularly tragic, this rock was only 50 metres from Meagher's Island (now called Mosher Island) near Halifax. *Atlantic* rolled over and sank quickly, and between 3:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., all rescue work had to take place. Supreme efforts were made to rescue the passengers and crew, but most quickly perished in the ice-cold, killing water or in the chaotic conditions on board, with the exits immediately being flooded with the weight of tons of freezing water and the boilers all bursting, covering some areas with fatal, burning steam.

The ship's quartermaster, John Speakman, swam to a rock near shore while towing a light line. Using that line, he was able to tow over a heavier line, and with the help of some other men, including third officer Brady, they managed to get many people to shore safely. Local fishermen also helped rescue the survivors, but in the end, of the 952 on board, 562 perished in the disaster. The majority were women and children since they were located either amidships or in the stern of the ship, which had sunk first. The only young survivor was a twelve-year-old boy, John Hindley whose parents and brother had drowned. They had been travelling to visit two sisters in New York.

Most of the single men survived, being located in the bow which ended up in shallow water and closer to shore. Many of them were able to climb out of the bow, and on the whole, were physically fit and young. Captain Williams, hindered by a broken thigh bone, helped as much as he could. After the inquiry, his ticket was suspended for two years.

A local magistrate and Church of England clergyman, William Ancient, was also widely acclaimed for his role, since when he heard of the disaster at approximately 8:00 a.m., he had dispatched men over land with three huge boats to rescue the last survivors. The first officer, J.W. Firth, could not swim. He and several others had been clinging to the rigging for some hours. Reverend Ancient had been in the Royal Navy, and his knowledge and skills enabled him to save all but one of those in the rigging. For more on Reverend Ancient's role, see **http://www.ssatlantic.com/ancients.shtml**.

Third officer Brady was later considered the hero of the wreck. As he walked into Halifax at 10:00 p.m. on April 1st, the exhausted Brady was not believed as he tried to tell people about the disaster and the need for help. This was partly because some people were not expecting SS *Atlantic* in Halifax, and sadly, some others thought it was a late April Fool's Day joke. Recovery and burial of the large numbers of victims took weeks. Divers were paid rewards for recovering the many bodies trapped within the hull, and locals worked for months to salvage the valuable cargo of carriages, costume jewelry, etc.

Now, a monument to this wreck is located at the mass grave near an interpretation Centre in the Terence Bay Anglican Cemetery, while a smaller monument marks a second mass grave at the Catholic cemetery. In total, 277 Protestants and 150 Catholics were buried in the area. Among those buried elsewhere was the 25-year old ship's purser, Ambrose Worthington. His headstone can be found in the Camp Hill Cemetery in Halifax.

The Canadian Government's inquiry concluded with the statement, "...the conduct of Captain Williams in the management of his ship during the twelve or fourteen hours preceding the disaster, was so gravely at variance with what ought to have been the conduct of a man placed in his responsible position".

One of the authors' beliefs is that the crew credited their captain's every word and put too much faith in him. Fourth officer Brown said in his testimony that they did not heave the lead overboard to get soundings (which would have saved the ship) because the captain said they would see the Sambro lighthouse and make their way safely into Halifax Harbour. This over-confidence in the captain's words on the part of the crew might remind the audience of the hierarchical distance between Captain and Crew that was common in those days. And the fact that the captain went to bed at midnight (when the inquest said he should have been managing his ship) gave the crew a false sense of security.

NORTHWEST PASSAGE 7 MAR.

– Jenny Medill

Michael Downing, long time member and former director of HFN, presented "For Just One Time, to take the Northwest Passage".

It is for most people truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience to cruise the Arctic Ocean and visit the unique landscape, people, flora, and fauna of the far north. The evening was introduced by the 'ghost' of Stan Rogers (Michael in very fine voice indeed) singing his famous hit 'Northwest Passage', while showing a montage of pictures illustrating the history of the search for the Northwest Passage through the nineteenth century – the golden age of Arctic exploration.

Prior to the first half of the nineteenth century several northern European countries had sent out expeditions looking for an alternative (shorter) seaway to China and India. Although these ventures failed, new coasts and islands were discovered.

Ice cores taken from 1810-1860 show the temperatures of sea ice at that time to be four degrees below the 700-year average. Captain Sir John Franklin had left England in 1845; he was 59 and wintered on Beechey Island from 1845 to 1846. He got around Cornwallis Island first and then lay frozen-in at Victoria Strait for two winters. By April 22nd, 1848, there were only 105 out of 129 men left in his group when they landed at Victory Point. It is now believed that the route he took would only have been open about one year in five! A quote from the Arctic Council Marine Shipping Report for 2009 states – "Victoria Strait offers the worst ice conditions along the mainland coast of Canada." Many of the possible passages attempted by the explorers were quite shallow. "Vessels of 10-metre draft or more can use only the northern route, choosing between the McClure and Prince of Wales Straits". No wonder so many early explorers perished in their attempts!

Sir Robert McClure was credited with the discovery of the Northwest Passage by sea in 1851. The Northwest Passage was not completely conquered by sea until 1906, when Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen completed a three-year voyage in the boat Gjoa.

In modern times the first tourist vessel in the Canadian Arctic was the cruiseship *Explorer* in 1984, with 98 passengers. From 1992-2004 she conducted one to three cruises per year. A steady increase has occurred since then, and in 2010 Greenland had 300,000 visitors; Northern Norway 100,000; Iceland 30,000; Nunavut 3-5,000; and Antarctica 40,000.

Michael's cruise was with a University of Toronto Alumni Travel Programme on a voyage run by 'One Ocean Expeditions' (New Zealand) on the Russian Academy of Science ship *Akademik Ioffe*, a 117-metre research vessel with a crew of 63 Russians, other staff, resource people, and lecturers. It can carry about 85 passengers and has a draft of six metres. At embarkation stops, passengers transfer to land via Zodiacs.

His flight north started Aug. 28th, 2011, landing in Kugluktuk, Nunavut. Michael provided some interesting statistics about Nunavut. Its population is roughly 32,000 (2006), of which 95% are Inuit. (The Yukon has 21% indigenous peoples, and Greenland less than 80%.) Inuktitut is spoken in 60% of the homes, 60% of the population is under 25, 41% are under 16, and its growth rate is three times the national average!

Michael's group embarked on *Akademik Ioffe* via Zodiacs. There was no ice in the harbour (unlike in Franklin's time) and the sun did not set until midnight! On the second day, they reached Bernard Harbour, a DEW line station. Caribou were observed, and about 40 Muskoxen were sighted on Victoria Island. Other observations that day – Arctic Hare, Pacific Loon, Glaucous Gull, and Jaegers. August 30th Johansen Bay observations were Arctic Wolf, Tundra Swan, Sandhill Crane, Rough-legged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, and Yellow-billed Loon.

At Cambridge Bay they explored the wreck of the vessel *Maud*, built for Amundsen in 1917. It was sold to The Hudson's Bay Company in 1925, and it sunk at its mooring in 1928. Michael and fellow passengers were entertained by the elders of Cambridge Bay with a fashion show and throat singing. The trip's resource people included a biologist, a photographer/birder, and in Cambridge Bay – a Parks Canada naturalist.

At Victory Point Franklin's cairn was found by the McClintock expedition on May 6th 1859, some 12 years after it was erected. Explorer John Rae had learned the fate of Franklin's men in April, 1854 from the Inuit and he reported it later that year. Franklin and his men had become icebound so they then tried to reach safety by travelling on land. They eventually starved and froze to death.

While on nature walks, tourists were protected from possible bear attacks by armed guides. For Michael, the best part of their times on land was when they were able to experience absolute perfect silence, admiring the breathtaking beauty of the land around them. At times the pace was hectic, and he felt that not enough time was allowed just to experience nature.

The first Polar Bears were spotted on Lady Parry Island. Other observations that day were Ringed and Bearded Seals, a Dovekie in summer plumage, and Eiders. On September 4th they moved through the Fury and Hecla Strait to Igloolik (in 1822 Edward Parry sailed this Strait and was iced in for two years). *Akademik Ioffe* was the first ever cruiseship to visit Igloolik and the visitors were welcomed by the children who were keen to have their photos taken, instantly being able to see themselves on the digital cameras. The Bowhead Whale count there was over 70, about 10% of the entire Arctic population!

On September 5th they were in Fox Basin and the ship crossed the Arctic Circle; seas were rough and many people absent at meal times! On September 6th, they arrived at Cape Dorset, with a population of about 1,500. It's famous for its artisans who work in stone and print-making. Its Co-op does about 10 million dollars worth of business every year!

September 7th – walrus were spotted on Big Island. It was warm and wet with swarms of black flies at landing but strangely, they were not biting. September 6th – a Polar Bear was spotted swimming by an iceberg, and on

September 9th, at Monumental Island, Michael snapped his best picture yet of a Polar Bear with cub.

On September 10th they arrived in Iqaluit and toured around town. Michael took a few shots of the high price of groceries in the local store and the one and only Tim Horton's in the far north. He then visited a sled dog compound, the Nunavut Legislature (stunning in its beautiful simplicity of light woods), and Sylvia Grinnell Park.

Thank you Michael for giving us this wonderful experience through your eyes of the land travelled by many Arctic explorers. We can only imagine the hardship and horrors they went through, but hope they also experienced the wonders of swimming Polar bears, Narwhals and Bowheads, the colours of the sunsets, and the sudden blooming of the tundra. Thank you also for sharing your notes therefore making this task easier. I, for one, will be doing further reading on Arctic exploration.

MEMBERS' PHOTO NIGHT 7 MAR.

– Stephanie Robertson

Peter Webster, who has hosted and coordinated this programme with quiet efficiency for some time now, did so again for this March 7th evening; thank you so much Peter.

TREE ART

Grace Beazley had put together a sequence of images for her presentation which were inspired by two experiences; the finding of a heart-shaped rock (among many others found on their 2008 river rafting trip on the Nahanni in the NWT), and the discovery of a heart-shaped hole in a tree in Keji at one of the group campsites last summer. Both experiences gave her the idea for her "Tree Art" sequence of images. Also, at her request, Grace had a willing photographer available to take her inspiring pictures – her husband Richard!

After showing us the heart-shaped rock and tree-hole, we saw a very striking silhouette of a burnt Jack Pine at Purcell's Cove Conservation Lands, and then a beautiful close-up of drips on a branch, with marvelous reflections in the drips and colourful berries in the background.

Then followed a cross section of a huge tree stump near Pete's Frootique on Dresden Row, with its grain lines beautifully enhanced by the rain in which could faintly be seen a 'face'; and a stark, wind-swept, stunted tree at Taylor's Head Provincial Park showed us very graphically what the forces of nature can do.

We all had a chuckle at a 'boot' which had caught Grace's eye at the Drowned Forest at Hawke Beach on Cape Sable Island – a weatherbeaten piece of tree. Nature's palette of autumn colours was revealed at Midland Road, near Minto, N.B. A beautufully weathered and burled tree cavity at Keji also revealed facial images.

Woodpeckers generated the next two images – a Red Spruce tree at NSNT's Meander River property that had had most of the bark pecked off – Grace had never before seen anything like it; and a squarish hole created by a Pileated Woodpecker for its entrance into the inner core of a Red Spruce (Miramichi, NB; mid-January 2013).

Then there was then shown a wood-burl discovered at the NSNT's Meander River property which revealed a 'face' with fuzzy hair!

Her last images had a snow-theme. The first two were of a 'Snow Ladder' and a 'Snow Coil' at Miramichi, N.B. taken in mid-January 2013; then there was a wonderfully strange one of two snowy towers (trees underneath leaning together?) which she had titled 'Siamese Snow Caps'. Beautiful beech leaves provided great contrast with snow and evergreens at Leminster, on the Windsor/New Ross Road, and a strangely-shaped branch at Keji looked very much like a duck.

In closing, she formally thanked Richard for being her photographer, and also thanked Peter Webster for his part in having organised the programme.

BUTTERFLIES

Verna Higgins, who has worked with the Nova Scotia Butterfly Atlas programme since its inception, showed many exquisite butterfly photos. Many were taken in the Musquodoboit Valley, where there is no use of pesticides to harm them. We first saw a Mustard White, *Pieris napi*, on a yellow flower, and then a Pepper And Salt Skipper, *Amblyskirtes hegon*, which used to be quite rare, but is now seen more and more often. There were also shown a Common Hobomark Skipper, *Poanes hobomok*, a Siver-bordered Fritillary, *Boloria selene*, and a Henry's Elfin, *Incisalia henrici* (so small it fit in a tiny glass vial and was photographed in there!).

We saw a Question Mark, *Polygonia interrogantionis*, (the mark on the wing took a while to find), and a dreamy Dusky Wing, *Erynnis icelus*, camouflaged against its background. There was an Arctic Skipper, *Carterocephalus palaemon*, and a Harris Checkerspot, *Chlosyne nycteis*. A Northern Pearl Crescent, *Phyciodes selenis*, had been photographed in a vial as well, and Verna had also managed to photograph one of the smallest of the skippers (1/2 inches long) – the European, *Thymelicus lineola*. A southern migrant, the American Painted Lady, *Vanessa virginiensis*, and the beautiful Viceroy, *Limenitis archippus,* finished the beautiful collection of butterfly pictures which Verna had put together for her presentation.

Dennis Hippern had a wonderful collection of finds from beachcombing, and **Jim Medill** shared his video presentation about constructing a natural garden pond he had made for his Garden Club. **Charles Cron** had invited some members of the Wildflower society of Newfoundland and Labrador, along with ten local naturalists, to visit and see plants, and rare plants too, in southwestern Nova Scotia. These wonderful pictures will be reported upon in the Summer Issue, #151, of the Halifax Field naturalist – as **Beachcombing**, **A Garden Pond**, and **Coastal Plain Flora**.

FIELD TRIPS

ST. MARY'S RIVER WEEKEND

— Karen McKendry
Nova Scotia Nature Trust

Date: Sat. & Sun., September 21st
Place: St. Mary's River, near Sherbrooke
Weather: **Sat.** - sunny, very windy; **Sun.** - overcast/drizzle
Interpreter: Karen McKendry
Participants: 13

The colours were at their glorious peak along the St. Mary's River when 13 HFN and Nature Trust members met for three guided walks in the St. Mary's River area.

To start, we met at the St. Mary's River Association Education & Interpretive Centre on Highway #7, north of Sherbrooke. Participants had a moment to explore the Centre's interesting displays – about the river's ecology and its history of fishing – before moving outside.

From the Centre's little picnic park, we could see the Nature Trust's C.W. Anderson Conservation Lands across the river. This forested property borders the river at Mad Falls, where Bald Eagles are often seen feeding (indeed, we saw one on a nest further up the highway). This 111-acre parcel was donated by three generations of Andersons who still live in the area. The Nature Trust has four properties permanently protected for nature conservation along the St. Mary's River, but only one is easily accessible by the public, and only with permission from the adjacent landowner whose land must be crossed to reach it. Each property has outstanding forests and extensive, healthy shorelines, and each one also has a history of how the Andersons came to the decision to protect their land, forever, with the help of the Nature Trust.

We then drove a short distance to a nearby property to start our first walk. Its theme was forest succession. Forest succession is a form of ecological succession, which is the phenomenon by which an ecological community changes in a fairly predictable way into a series of other ecological communities over time. The communities that are observed are strongly influenced by things such as site conditions; types of disturbance; species present at the site and in the surrounding landscape; and chance. Despite having so many factors that influence it, it is somewhat possible to predict what kind of forest you are going to see in the future at a given site. For the property we visited, DNR staff from the Forest Ecosystems group had previously visited the site and let the Nature Trust know the forest types there, and what later succession forest types might be expected. Because this site is transitioning from 'old field' to 'old forest', it was a perfect location to 'walk through' the stages of forest succession on the St. Mary's River floodplain.

We started out in an old field, filled with grasses, asters, and goldenrod. Right on the river bank, which had escaped agricultural clearing, were some tough old beeches, Red Maples, and Sugar Maples. These trees are regularly injured as debris and ice bash up against them from the river's frequent flooding; we saw scars nearly a couple of metres up the trunks of some of them! You have to be tough to live on a floodplain!

As we proceeded through this field to a field that had been left fallow even longer than the previous one, we started to observe early successional forest species, such as alders, small Red Maples and birches, and also Lady Fern and Sensitive Fern (in the wettest areas). Alders, which can be challenging to love because of the thick, nearly impenetrable walls they weave, are important 'pioneer' species of an early-stage forest, providing nitrogen to the soil and habitat for birds and insects.

Continuing further along the property, all the field plants and alders disappeared and we arrived in a mid-stage forest. Here we saw medium-sized Ironwood, Red Oak, White Spruce, and many more maples. The canopy was mostly closed, leading to a more shaded forest floor containing lots of New York Ferns. The area became more structurally complex, with dead logs and branches on the forest floor, and standing dead trees (so important for wildlife). Again, we could see how powerful the river could be, with sections of this forest floor muddied and flattened by its recent flooding.

Towards the end of our walk (and the end of the property), we reached an area that is just starting to become late-stage forest. The trees here were bigger, and included Yellow Birch and Red Oak, and we found some shade-tolerant understory species that were moving in, including Striped Maple and several fern species. Still, even the biggest trees were perhaps only 70 years old, and have some years to go before being considered 'old-growth'. This area also needed to develop the structure and function of an 'old-growth' forest. This property was a fantastic example of a place that, if left to its own devices, could restore itself to a natural and biologically diverse forest.

On Sunday morning we met for a little light 'bushwacking'. You see, to get to the Nature Trust's Archibald Conservation Lands, you must first pass through an adjacent private property which has no trails. Before starting out we looked through a series of aerial photos of the property, starting in 1931 and leading up to the present. In the 1930's, the property was almost entirely agricultural fields, with only a few trees left standing along the backwater that snakes through the property. Over the decades, you could see evidence of the fields starting to be abandoned, and the 'seed trees' along the backwater starting to populate the old fields. By the 2008 image, the entire area was forest-covered again, and you could still see the now giant canopies of some of the small seed trees which were visible in the 1931 image. One of the goals of our walk was to find these 'grandmother' trees – if they were still standing!

We started by crossing through a meadow that during the summer is home to the rare Canada Lily. Once in the forest, the understory was more open, making winding our way through the woods much easier. We followed along the backwater which was in the middle of the property. These backwaters, sometimes still connected to, and sometimes cut off from, from the St. Mary's River, provide an important, special kind of

habitat for many wildlife species, including Wood Turtles. Their deep waters and muddy banks provide the conditions needed for Wood Turtles to burrow in and hibernate for the winter.

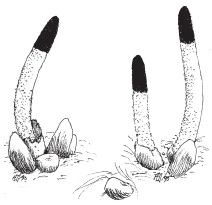
This forest is mid- to late-successional, similar to the property we visited on Saturday. But, it has some different tree species, exemplifying the fact that forest succession can be quite site specific. Along our walk here we saw Red Oaks, maples, beeches, and birches, but at this site we also found Black Cherry and Hawthorn. The forest had the occasional big White Pine and White Spruce. We also kept our eye out for mushrooms, since on this walk we were accompanied by mushroom gurus John Crabtree and Rick MacNeil. They helped us identify some nice shelf mushrooms, also Turkey Tail and Sulphur Tuft mushrooms. As we reached the border of the Archibald Conservation Lands, the big, old oak trees from the 1931 air photo came into view. Indeed, they had impressive canopies, indicating that they likely grew up much of their lives in an open setting. Many of their progeny surrounded us as well. One of the three biggest has been damaged recently, but half of it was still green and going strong. I wonder how they will be doing in another 80 years!

For Sunday afternoon we had obtained special permission to visit an old-growth floodplain forest on a nearby private parcel of land. This property is at the junction of the west and east branches of the St. Mary's River, and has been forested since before 1931 (we also had a series of aerial photos for this property as well). Towering Red Maples, Sugar Maples, Red Oaks, ash, and Yellow Birch lined the paths we walked, but we also kept our heads down to scour the forest floor for mushrooms. With John's and Rick's help once again, we found a cool-feeling toothed-jelly fungus, a thin-walled Maze Polypore (appropriately within the genus Daedaleopsis), and a (questionable) Chicken-of-the-woods mushroom. Our thanks go to John and Rick for sharing their mushroom expertise, and also to special guests Bob Bancroft and Alice Reed for sharing their knowledge on the walk as well.

The St. Mary's River has a rich history, which includes time periods where much of the river floodplain was converted to human uses. But thankfully, there are pockets which are recovering to Acadian forests quite nicely and quickly. I felt grateful to visit this special place, and hopeful that future generations will get to have similar awe-inspiring experiences there thanks to the conservation work being done along the river by the Nature Trust, the St. Mary's River Association, and local landowners.

The following mushroom list is courtesy of John Crabtree.

Shelf Mushroom	*Panellus serotinus*
Chicken-of-theWoods	*Trametes versicolor*
Toothed-jelly Fungus	*Laetiporus sulphurous*
	Pseudohydnum gelatinosum
	Cortinarius armillatus
	Xeromphalina campanella
	Hydnum umbillicatum
	Ganoderma applanatum
	Russula paludosa
	Trichaptum biformis
	Piptoporus betulinas
	Cortinarius violaceous
	Scleroderma citrinum
	Daedaleopsis confragosa
	Hypholoma fasciculare
	Lactarius spp.
	Entoloma spp.



SEWER STROLL

— Suzanne Borkowski

Date: Saturday, January 12th
Stops: Various; around Halifax Harbour & Bedford Basin
Weather: Sunny/cloudy; -6˚ to +4˚C; very little wind
Leaders: Suzanne Borkowski
Participants: ±30

Approximately 30 people gathered at McCormack's Beach for the Bird Society's Annual Sewer Stroll, with more people joining us as the morning progressed. Some were from the Halifax Field Naturalists, some were from the N.S. Bird Society, and a fair number had just heard about it, (mainly from Dave Currie's postings on Facebook), and decided to come along! The weather was great – a mix of sun and cloud with very little wind, and temperatures ranging from -6˚ to +4˚C.

We did a quick scan of the beach and saw the usual gulls, a Black Scoter, a Common Murre, some Red-breasted Mergansers, and a few Black Ducks and Mallards. Things got exciting when we reached Hartlen Point. Everyone got great looks at the Ross's Goose and the accompanying Snow Geese. On the water we added Dovekie, Black Guillemot, Common Goldeneye, Common Eider, and Iceland Gull. While we were watching we heard and saw a flock of Horned Larks land on the beach in front of us; and over Devil's Island we scoped a Harrier and a Rough-legged Hawk. A couple of people noticed a pair of Bald Eagles flying overhead. A Mockingbird was shown to us by Dave Currie on McCormac's Lane, and a Razorbill was added a little further down the coast.

In the Cove across from Tim Horton's (Main Road in Eastern Passage), Clarence Stevens Jr. found a Tufted Duck mixed in with a group of Greater and Lesser Scaup. With a bit of work, most of us managed to pick it out; it kept hiding among the Scaup, but its bad hairdo gave it away!

At Sullivan's Pond we added Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, and Northern Pintail. We tried to pick out the Mew Gull, but just couldn't identify it! (Where is Bernard Burke when you need him?)

On Silver's Road, just down from Sullivan's Pond, we saw the Baltimore Oriole at Judy O'Brien's feeder. We also saw Pine Siskins and Purple Finch in that area.

In the afternoon, we visited Tuft's Cove, a feeder near Albro Lake Road, Lois Codling's feeder in Lower Sackville, and a couple of spots along the Bedford waterfront. These stops gave us another Oriole, a Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Redpolls with one Hoary Redpoll, some Bufflehead, Glaucous Gulls, and five Barrows Goldeneye.

We ended this year's sewer stroll with 64 species!

WINTER'S NIGHT SKY

— Peter & Gillian Webster

Date: Tuesday, February 12th
Place: Dunn Building, Dalhousie University
Weather: Cold and cloudy
Interpreter: Patrick Kelly
Participants: 13

The Halifax Planetarium is set up in the Dunn Building, Dalhousie University, and while the planetarium equipment is owned by the Nova Scotia Museum, it is operated by the volunteer Nova Scotia Astronomy Society. Limited seats were available for this special hour-long showing, and every space in the small auditorium was filled, with 22 HFN participants turning out on this cold and cloudy February evening.

On clear nights the show often moves outside after the planetarium session for a look at the real night sky with telescopes; this was not possible on this particular evening, but the show was excellent nonetheless.

Jim Medill kindly organised us beforehand. He and our presenter Patrick Kelly met us all in the foyer of the Dunn Building, Patrick being a part-time Astronomy Professor at Dalhousie University who was ably assisted by Stephen Payne.

Winter evenings exhibit some of the brightest stars of the entire night sky, spread across several distinct constellations. A treat this winter was the presence of brilliant Jupiter in their midst. Jupiter is the fourth brightest object in the sky (after the Sun, the Moon, and Venus; it is the fifth planet from the Sun and by far the largest, more than twice as massive as all the other planets combined (the mass of Jupiter is 318 times that of Earth). And in 1610, when Galileo first pointed a telescope at the sky, he discovered Jupiter's four large moons – Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto (now known as the Galilean moons) and recorded their motions back and forth around Jupiter. This was the first discovery of a fulcrum of motion not apparently centred on the Earth. At the present time, 60 moons are now identified! Find out more Jupiter facts, pictures, and information by going to **http://nineplanets.org**.

Patrick points out that astronomy and humans' long fascination with the night sky is closely linked to an exploration of all aspects of science. Basic geometry allowed Greek scholar Eratosthenes (276-194 BC,) to determine the circumference of the Earth; he correctly calculated that the earth must be round, and in addition, he was able to estimate its size – correct to within 5%!

The physics of moving objects on earth allows us to begin to understand the movement of celestial objects in space; and an understanding of the chemistry of gases, liquids, and solids is needed to understand their make-up. The knowledge that flames burn different colours depending on how hot they are allows us to estimate the temperature of far distant stars by their colour. Before we can understand the stars we see as the sky grows dark at night, we must first understand how our human react to, and distinguish, their light.

Patrick began by transporting us to the skies as they would appear at the North Pole, and he tracked the movement of Polaris, the North Star. The groupings of stars we have identified, and given mythical names to, are called constellations, and many stars were named by peoples of the Near East and the Mediterranean thousands of years ago. Many stars still bear the Arabic names passed down to us, such as Betelgeuse in the constellation Orion, which means 'big/giant red shoulder'. It is a large and ancient but now cooling star. Similarly, the large red star in the constellation Taurus (the bull) forms its eye, and its name in Arabic is Aldebaran, meaning 'the follower', presumably because this bright star appears to follow the Pleiades, or 'Seven Sisters' star cluster in the night sky.

He linked the North Star to one of the most common constellations – the Big Dipper. Several of the visible constellations are associated with the ancient Greek hero, Perseus. Andromeda is one, and is home to the largest object observable without a telescope, the Andromeda galaxy.

Patrick then demonstrated the orderly movements of the night sky as the earth rotates through the course of 24 hours – both as we progress through the seasons, and as we view the sky from different points on the earth. We observe the visible planets as they move along a path across the heavens called the ecliptic; this is also the apparent path of the Sun and Moon over the course of a year. Constellations along the ecliptic are called zodiacal constellations. Due to the constellation boundaries being redefined in 1930 by the International Astronomical Union, the path of the ecliptic now officially passes through thirteen constellations – the twelve traditional zodiac constellations – plus Ophiuchus, the bottom part of which interjects between Scorpio and Sagittarius.

This planetarium's star projector is old, dating from the 1950s. It is simple and limited compared to larger and more modern ones, but it is a marvellous piece of scientific equipment, still providing a wonderful opportunity to simulate celestial movement. Patrick then described several of the key objects and constellations visible in our skies at this time of year. In each case he supplemented the planetarium view with illustrations of the constellation patterns and detailed telescopic views of planets and galaxies. We learned a lot from his engaging presentation.

Read more about the evening sky each month with the aid of a free sky map at **http://skymaps.com**.

ALMANAC

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

"It always amazes me to look at the little, wrinkled brown seeds and think of the rainbows in 'em," said Captain Jim. "When I ponder on them seeds I don't find it nowise hard to believe that we've got souls that'll live in other worlds. You couldn't hardly believe there was life in them tiny things, some no bigger than grains of dust, let alone colour and scent, if you hadn't seen the miracle, could you?"

– L. M. Montgomery in Anne's House of Dreams

NATURAL EVENTS

10 Mar. Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 AST; turn clocks ahead one hour.
20 Mar. Vernal Equinox at 11:02 GMT; Spring begins in the Northern hemisphere.
27 Mar. Full Moon rises at 20:17 ADT.
16 Apr. The daily minimum temperature at Shearwater is above 0˚.
22 Apr. Earth Day.
25 Apr. Full Moon; Moonrise at 20:21 ADT.
11 May North American Bird Migration Count Day.
25 May Full Moon; Moonrise at 21:29 ADT.
25 May Moon at close Perigee; large tides for several days.
28 May The date of last spring frost in Halifax (i.e. Env. Can. says there is only a 1:10 chance that spring frost will occur after this date). Look forward to 155 frost-free days.
8 Jun. World Oceans Day.
14 Jun.-16 Jun. The earliest mornings of the year: Sun rises at 5:28 ADT.
21 Jun. Summer Solstice at 05:04 GMT. Summer begins in the Northern hemisphere. The longest day of the year, with 15 hours and 34 minutes of daylight at Halifax.
22 Jun.-29 Jun. The latest evenings of the year; Sun sets at 21:04 ADT.
23 Jun. Full Moon; Moonrise at 21:08 ADT.
23 Jun. Moon at close Perigee; large tides for several days.

– Sources: Atmospheric Environment Service, Climate Normals 1951-80 Halifax (Shearwater A) N.S.; Blomidon Naturalists Society Calendar, 2013; United States Naval Observatory Data Services.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET ON SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER SATURDAYS FOR HALIFAX: 44 39 N, 063 36 W

2	**Mar.**	6:50	18:04	**6**	**Apr.**	6:46	19:48
9	**Mar.**	6:37	18:13	**13**	**Apr.**	6:33	19:57
16	**Mar.**	7:25	19:22	**20**	**Apr.**	6:21	20:06
23	**Mar.**	7:12	19:31	**27**	**Apr.**	6:10	20:14
30	**Mar.**	6:59	19:40				
4	**May**	6:00	20:23	**1**	**Jun.**	5:32	20:53
11	**May**	5:51	20:31	**8**	**Jun.**	5:29	20:58
18	**May**	5:43	20:39	**15**	**Jun.**	5:28	21:02
25	**May**	5:37	20:47	**22**	**Jun.**	5:29	21:04
				29	**Jun.**	5:32	21:04

ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

Blomidon Naturalists Society: Indoor meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month, in Room BAC241 of the Beveridge Arts Centre of Acadia University, Wolfville, at 7:30 p.m. Field trips usually depart from the Wolfville Waterfront, Front Street, Wolfville. For more information, go to **http://www.blomidonnaturalists.ca/**.

18 Mar. "The Big Eclipse Gamble", with speaker Mary Lou Whitehorne, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.
13 Apr. **Rain Date 14 Apr.** "Herbert River Canoe Trip", with leader Patrick Kelly, 472-2322, **patrick.kelly@dal.ca**.
15 Apr. Topic to be Announced.
27 Apr. "Birding in Kings County Forests", with leader: Rick Whitman, 542-2917, **rick.whitman@ns.sympatico.ca**.
20 May "Arctic Plants", with speaker Carolyn Mallory.
17 Jun. "Is it Hot Enough for You? Facts and Lore about Weather in Canada", with speaker Dr. Rob Raeside, Dept.of Earth and Environmental Science, Acadia University.

Burke-Gaffney Observatory: Public shows at the Burke-Gaffney Observatory at Saint Mary's University are held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, except from June through September when they are held every Saturday. Tours begin at 7:00 p.m. between November 1st and March 30th, and at either 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. (depending on when it gets dark) between April 1st and October 31st. For more information, 496-8257; or go to **http://www.smu.ca/academic/science/ap/**.

Friends of McNab's Island: Meetings take place at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. Contact Fay Power, 443-1749, or go to **http://www.mcnabsisland.ca/**.

15 Apr. AGM, and "Can McNab's Island become HRM's Central Park?", with speaker Prof. Patricia Manual of Dalhousie.
2 Jun. **Rain Date 9 Jun.** "McNab's and Lawlor Islands Beach Cleanup".

Friends of the Public Gardens: For more information got to **http://www.halifaxpublicgardens.ca/**.

21 Mar. The Annual Jarvis Lecture, Sobey Building, St. Mary's U. will be "The influence that England has Played in the Development of Canadian Gardens", with speaker Carol Goodwin, Dalhousie's Faculty of Agriculture.

Nature Nova Scotia: (Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists) For more information, go to **http://www.naturens.ca**.
24 May- 26 May. "Nature Nova Scotia Annual Meeting", at Milford House, near Kejimkujik National Park.

Nova Scotia Bird Society: Indoor meetings usually take place on the 4th Thursday of the month, September to April, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information – Chris Pepper, 829-3478, **cpepper@ymail.com**; **or** email the trip leader; **or** go to **http://nsbs.chebucto.org/**.

23 Mar. **Storm Date 24 Mar**. "New Birders Walk, Shubie Canal, Dartmouth", with leaders Chris Pepper, 483-6693; Kate Steele, 476-2883, **katefsteele@gmail.com**.
28 Mar. "Lead Poisoning in Bald Eagles", with speaker Helene Van Doninck, Cobequid Rehabilitation Centre.
30 Mar. **Storm Date 31 Mar**. "Baccaro & Blanche Peninsula, Shelburne Co." with leader James Hirtle, 764-2182, **jrhbirder@hotmail.com**.
13 Apr. "Martinique Beach, HRM", with leader Ian McLaren, 429-7024, **iamclar@dal.ca**.
25 Apr. "A Photographic Visit to Tancook Island", with speaker Hillary Dionne.
28 Apr. **Registration necessary!** "Hartlen Point, HRM", with leader: David Currie, 476-6616, 876-8745, **David_@ns.sympatico.ca**.
4 May "Cape Sable Island, Shelburne Co.", with leader Murray Newell, 745-0801.
5 May "New Birders Walk, Brookfield, Colchester Co." with leaders, Chris Pepper, **cpepper@ymail.com**; Kate Steele, 476-2883, **katefsteele@gmail.com**.
11 May "Nova Scotia Spring Migration Count"; for more details, contact your regional coordinator, or Chris Pepper, 483-6693, **cpepper@ymail.com**.
18 May "Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary, Cumberland Co.", with leader Kathleen Spicer, 392-2815, **kbspicer902@gmail.com**.
20 May "Historic Hants County", with leader Suzanne Borkowski, 488-0345, **suzanneborkowski@yahoo.ca**.
24 May- 27 May. **Pre-registration is necessary!** "Bon Portage Island, Shelburne Co." with leader: Claire Diggins, 825-6152, **claire_diggins@hotmail.com**.
25 May "Port L'Hebert, Shelburne Co.", with leaders Dorothy Poole, 354-4844, **dpoolex@ns.sympatico.ca**; Clyde Stoddart, 745-2105.
26 May "New Birders Walk, Chain of Lakes, HRM", with leader Bonnie Carmichael, **bonniecarmichael@hotamil.com**.

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources: Many outings that will take place in Provincial Parks are listed in the "Parks are for People" Programme, available at museums, parks, and tourist bureaus, and on the web at **http://www.novascotiaparks.ca/**.

Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History: For more information, 424-6099, 424-7353; **http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mnhnew/**.

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society: Meets the fourth Monday of the month, September to May, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 7:30 p.m. For more information – Heather Drope, 423-7032; or go to **http://www.nswildflora.ca/**.

25 Mar. "New Research and Species in our Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora", with speaker Martin L. H. Thomas.
22 Apr. AGM, and "Wind and Fire in Gloomy Forests", with speaker Donna Crossland, Senior Park Warden, Keji.
May **Date to be announced**. "Spring Ephemerals Field Trip near Antigonish".

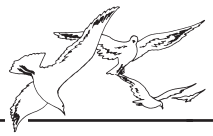
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax Chapter): Meets the third Friday of each month in Room L176 of the Loyola Academic Building at Saint Mary's University, 8:00 p.m. For more information, go to **http://halifax.rasc.ca/**.

Young Naturalists' Club: A fun, free nature club for children seven to 12 years. Meetings take place every third Saturday of the month (excepting July and August), at the Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., from 10:30 - 12:00 a.m. Field trips take place every fourth Sunday, at 1:00 p.m. For more information – Zoë Nudell, 209-2531, **yncns@yahoo.ca**; or, go to **http://nature1st.net/ync**.

Spring Contact the above coordinates for the upcoming Spring, 2013 programme of events.

– compiled by Patricia L. Chalmers

HALIFAX TIDE TABLE



April-avril

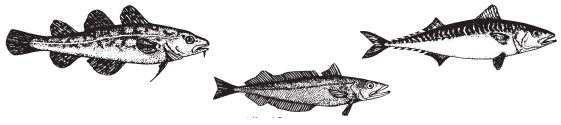
Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres
1	0607	**0.7**	0.2	**16**	0604	**2.0**	0.6
	1134	**5.6**	1.7		1157	**5.2**	1.6
MO	1829	**1.6**	0.5	TU	1827	**2.6**	0.8
LU	2348	**5.9**	1.8	MA			
2	0709	**0.7**	0.2	**17**	0003	**5.2**	1.6
	1229	**5.2**	1.6		0653	**2.0**	0.6
TU	1937	**1.6**	0.5	WE	1244	**4.9**	1.5
MA				ME	1926	**2.6**	0.8
3	0044	**5.6**	1.7	**18**	0051	**4.9**	1.5
	0812	**1.0**	0.3		0744	**2.0**	0.6
WE	1333	**4.9**	1.5	TH	1341	**4.9**	1.5
ME	2042	**1.6**	0.5	JE	2023	**2.6**	0.8
4	0151	**5.2**	1.6	**19**	0148	**4.9**	1.5
	0913	**1.0**	0.3		0837	**2.0**	0.6
TH	1451	**4.9**	1.5	FR	1449	**4.9**	1.5
JE	2145	**1.6**	0.5	VE	2117	**2.6**	0.8
5	0311	**5.2**	1.6	**20**	0256	**4.9**	1.5
	1013	**1.0**	0.3		0929	**2.0**	0.6
FR	1611	**5.2**	1.6	SA	1553	**5.2**	1.6
VE	2246	**1.3**	0.4	SA	2209	**2.3**	0.7
6	0428	**5.6**	1.7	**21**	0403	**4.9**	1.5
	1111	**1.0**	0.3		1020	**1.6**	0.5
SA	1711	**5.6**	1.7	SU	1644	**5.2**	1.6
SA	2344	**1.3**	0.4	DI	2259	**1.6**	0.5
7	0530	**5.6**	1.7	**22**	0459	**5.2**	1.6
	1206	**1.0**	0.3		1110	**1.3**	0.4
SU	1759	**5.9**	1.8	MO	1727	**5.6**	1.7
DI				LU	2349	**1.3**	0.4
8	0037	**1.0**	0.3	**23**	0549	**5.2**	1.6
	0621	**5.9**	1.8		1158	**1.0**	0.3
MO	1256	**1.0**	0.3	TU	1807	**5.9**	1.8
LU	1843	**5.9**	1.8	MA			
9	0125	**0.7**	0.2	**24**	0038	**0.7**	0.2
	0707	**5.9**	1.8		0635	**5.6**	1.7
TU	1342	**1.0**	0.3	WE	1245	**1.0**	0.3
MA	1924	**6.2**	1.9	ME	1849	**6.2**	1.9
10	0209	**0.7**	0.2	**25**	0126	**0.3**	0.1
	0751	**5.9**	1.8		0721	**5.6**	1.7
WE	1424	**1.0**	0.3	TH	1333	**0.7**	0.2
ME	2004	**6.2**	1.9	JE	1932	**6.6**	2.0
11	0250	**0.7**	0.2	**26**	0215	**0.0**	0.0
	0833	**5.9**	1.8		0807	**5.9**	1.8
TH	1502	**1.3**	0.4	FR	1422	**0.7**	0.2
JE	2043	**5.9**	1.8	VE	2017	**6.6**	2.0
12	0328	**0.7**	0.2	**27**	0305	**0.0**	0.0
	0915	**5.6**	1.7		0855	**5.9**	1.8
FR	1537	**1.6**	0.5	SA	1514	**0.7**	0.2
VE	2121	**5.9**	1.8	SA	2105	**6.6**	2.0
13	0404	**1.0**	0.3	**28**	0357	**0.0**	0.0
	0955	**5.6**	1.7		0944	**5.9**	1.8
SA	1610	**2.0**	0.6	SU	1612	**1.0**	0.3
SA	2200	**5.9**	1.8	DI	2154	**6.2**	1.9
14	0440	**1.3**	0.4	**29**	0454	**0.0**	0.0
	1035	**5.6**	1.7		1035	**5.9**	1.8
SU	1646	**2.3**	0.7	MO	1716	**1.3**	0.4
DI	2239	**5.6**	1.7	LU	2244	**6.2**	1.9
15	0520	**1.6**	0.5	**30**	0553	**0.3**	0.1
	1115	**5.2**	1.6		1127	**5.6**	1.7
MO	1732	**2.3**	0.7	TU	1824	**1.6**	0.5
LU	2320	**5.6**	1.7	MA	2337	**5.9**	1.8

May-mai

Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres
1	0655	**0.7**	0.2	**16**	0609	**2.0**	0.6
	1223	**5.6**	1.7		1212	**5.2**	1.6
WE	1930	**1.6**	0.5	TH	1847	**2.6**	0.8
ME				JE			
2	0034	**5.6**	1.7	**17**	0013	**5.2**	1.6
	0755	**1.0**	0.3		0659	**2.0**	0.6
TH	1325	**5.2**	1.6	FR	1259	**5.2**	1.6
JE	2034	**1.6**	0.5	VE	1943	**2.6**	0.8
3	0140	**5.2**	1.6	**18**	0103	**4.9**	1.5
	0855	**1.0**	0.3		0750	**2.0**	0.6
FR	1435	**5.2**	1.6	SA	1354	**5.2**	1.6
VE	2135	**1.6**	0.5	SA	2038	**2.3**	0.7
4	0256	**5.2**	1.6	**19**	0203	**4.9**	1.5
	0953	**1.0**	0.3		0842	**1.6**	0.5
SA	1546	**5.6**	1.7	SU	1452	**5.2**	1.6
SA	2233	**1.3**	0.4	DI	2132	**2.0**	0.6
5	0411	**5.2**	1.6	**20**	0311	**4.9**	1.5
	1049	**1.3**	0.4		0934	**1.6**	0.5
SU	1644	**5.6**	1.7	MO	1548	**5.6**	1.7
DI	2328	**1.0**	0.3	LU	2225	**1.6**	0.5
6	0512	**5.2**	1.6	**21**	0417	**4.9**	1.5
	1143	**1.3**	0.4		1027	**1.6**	0.5
MO	1732	**5.9**	1.8	TU	1639	**5.9**	1.8
LU				MA	2318	**1.0**	0.3
7	0019	**1.0**	0.3	**22**	0515	**5.2**	1.6
	0602	**5.6**	1.7		1121	**1.3**	0.4
TU	1234	**1.3**	0.4	WE	1727	**6.2**	1.9
MA	1815	**5.9**	1.8	ME			
8	0105	**0.7**	0.2	**23**	0011	**0.7**	0.2
	0648	**5.6**	1.7		0607	**5.2**	1.6
WE	1320	**1.3**	0.4	TH	1215	**1.0**	0.3
ME	1856	**5.9**	1.8	JE	1815	**6.2**	1.9
9	0147	**0.7**	0.2	**24**	0104	**0.0**	0.0
	0732	**5.6**	1.7		0658	**5.6**	1.7
TH	1402	**1.3**	0.4	FR	1309	**1.0**	0.3
JE	1935	**5.9**	1.8	VE	1905	**6.6**	2.0
10	0225	**0.7**	0.2	**25**	0156	**0.0**	0.0
	0814	**5.6**	1.7		0749	**5.9**	1.8
FR	1439	**1.6**	0.5	SA	1405	**1.0**	0.3
VE	2014	**5.9**	1.8	SA	1956	**6.6**	2.0
11	0300	**0.7**	0.2	**26**	0249	**−0.3**	−0.1
	0855	**5.6**	1.7		0840	**5.9**	1.8
SA	1511	**2.0**	0.6	SU	1502	**1.0**	0.3
SA	2053	**5.9**	1.8	DI	2048	**6.6**	2.0
12	0334	**1.0**	0.3	**27**	0343	**−0.3**	−0.1
	0934	**5.6**	1.7		0933	**5.9**	1.8
SU	1543	**2.0**	0.6	MO	1603	**1.0**	0.3
DI	2132	**5.9**	1.8	LU	2140	**6.6**	2.0
13	0407	**1.3**	0.4	**28**	0439	**0.0**	0.0
	1012	**5.6**	1.7		1025	**5.9**	1.8
MO	1617	**2.3**	0.7	TU	1707	**1.3**	0.4
LU	2211	**5.6**	1.7	MA	2233	**6.2**	1.9
14	0443	**1.3**	0.4	**29**	0536	**0.3**	0.1
	1051	**5.6**	1.7		1117	**5.9**	1.8
TU	1659	**2.6**	0.8	WE	1813	**1.3**	0.4
MA	2250	**5.6**	1.7	ME	2326	**5.9**	1.8
15	0523	**1.6**	0.5	**30**	0635	**0.7**	0.2
	1130	**5.2**	1.6		1210	**5.9**	1.8
WE	1751	**2.6**	0.8	TH	1916	**1.3**	0.4
ME	2330	**5.2**	1.6	JE			
				31	0022	**5.6**	1.7
					0733	**0.7**	0.2
				FR	1306	**5.6**	1.7
				VE	2017	**1.3**	0.4

June-juin

Day	Time	Feet	Metres	jour	heure	pieds	mètres
1	0122	**5.2**	1.6	**16**	0028	**5.2**	1.6
	0831	**1.0**	0.3		0710	**1.6**	0.5
SA	1406	**5.6**	1.7	SU	1307	**5.6**	1.7
SA	2116	**1.3**	0.4	DI	2001	**2.0**	0.6
2	0230	**4.9**	1.5	**17**	0121	**4.9**	1.5
	0927	**1.3**	0.4		0802	**1.6**	0.5
SU	1509	**5.6**	1.7	MO	1357	**5.6**	1.7
DI	2212	**1.3**	0.4	LU	2056	**1.6**	0.5
3	0342	**4.9**	1.5	**18**	0224	**4.9**	1.5
	1023	**1.3**	0.4		0856	**1.6**	0.5
MO	1609	**5.6**	1.7	TU	1454	**5.6**	1.7
LU	2305	**1.0**	0.3	MA	2153	**1.3**	0.4
4	0446	**4.9**	1.5	**19**	0333	**4.9**	1.5
	1118	**1.6**	0.5		0953	**1.6**	0.5
TU	1700	**5.6**	1.7	WE	1554	**5.9**	1.8
MA	2356	**1.0**	0.3	ME	2250	**1.0**	0.3
5	0541	**5.2**	1.6	**20**	0441	**5.2**	1.6
	1210	**1.6**	0.5		1052	**1.6**	0.5
WE	1747	**5.6**	1.7	TH	1652	**6.2**	1.9
ME				JE	2347	**0.7**	0.2
6	0042	**1.0**	0.3	**21**	0541	**5.2**	1.6
	0629	**5.2**	1.6		1152	**1.3**	0.4
TH	1258	**1.6**	0.5	FR	1749	**6.6**	2.0
JE	1830	**5.6**	1.7	VE			
7	0124	**0.7**	0.2	**22**	0044	**0.0**	0.0
	0713	**5.2**	1.6		0638	**5.6**	1.7
FR	1339	**1.6**	0.5	SA	1252	**1.0**	0.3
VE	1911	**5.6**	1.7	SA	1845	**6.6**	2.0
8	0201	**0.7**	0.2	**23**	0139	**0.0**	0.0
	0756	**5.6**	1.7		0733	**5.9**	1.8
SA	1415	**2.0**	0.6	SU	1352	**1.0**	0.3
SA	1951	**5.6**	1.7	DI	1940	**6.9**	2.1
9	0236	**1.0**	0.3	**24**	0233	**−0.3**	−0.1
	0836	**5.6**	1.7		0827	**6.2**	1.9
SU	1447	**2.0**	0.6	MO	1451	**1.0**	0.3
DI	2030	**5.9**	1.8	LU	2034	**6.6**	2.0
10	0309	**1.0**	0.3	**25**	0326	**−0.3**	−0.1
	0914	**5.6**	1.7		0920	**6.2**	1.9
MO	1518	**2.0**	0.6	TU	1551	**1.0**	0.3
LU	2109	**5.9**	1.8	MA	2128	**6.6**	2.0
11	0341	**1.0**	0.3	**26**	0420	**0.0**	0.0
	0950	**5.6**	1.7		1011	**6.2**	1.9
TU	1551	**2.3**	0.7	WE	1652	**1.0**	0.3
MA	2147	**5.6**	1.7	ME	2220	**6.2**	1.9
12	0415	**1.3**	0.4	**27**	0515	**0.3**	0.1
	1027	**5.6**	1.7		1100	**6.2**	1.9
WE	1631	**2.3**	0.7	TH	1754	**1.3**	0.4
ME	2225	**5.6**	1.7	JE	2311	**5.9**	1.8
13	0452	**1.3**	0.4	**28**	0610	**0.7**	0.2
	1103	**5.6**	1.7		1149	**6.2**	1.9
TH	1718	**2.3**	0.7	FR	1854	**1.3**	0.4
JE	2302	**5.6**	1.7	VE			
14	0534	**1.6**	0.5	**29**	0002	**5.6**	1.7
	1141	**5.6**	1.7		0706	**1.0**	0.3
FR	1811	**2.3**	0.7	SA	1238	**5.9**	1.8
VE	2342	**5.2**	1.6	SA	1952	**1.3**	0.4
15	0620	**1.6**	0.5	**30**	0056	**5.2**	1.6
	1222	**5.6**	1.7		0802	**1.3**	0.4
SA	1906	**2.3**	0.7	SU	1330	**5.6**	1.7
SA				DI	2049	**1.3**	0.4



ALL TIMES ARE AST

NATURE NOTES

JANUARY

Stephanie Robertson saw **a live ladybug** in her house on Jan. 3rd. Michael Downing saw **a Rough-legged Hawk** from the Halifax waterfront boardwalk on a blustery Boxing Day, 2012, hovering up and down, in its characteristic way, over George's Island. Ian McLaren saw **a Ross's Goose** on Dec. 29th, 2012 at Hartlen's Point golf course. It was first spotted by Mike King and later seen by scores of birders. This is the first time this species has been observed in Nova Scotia – a noteworthy event!! It is a smaller version of a Snow Goose; there were **eight Snow Geese seen** there as well. The surmise is that the geese were fleeing the snows in the U.S. (Wisconsin?).

As of Jan. 3rd, Janet Dalton still had **Cardinals** as visitors to her bird feeder. She saw a pair of them feeding on the ground underneath the feeder on January 3rd. Janet thinks they may have taken up permanent residency in her garden! Grace Beazley saw **an Albino Ring-necked Snake** in the N.S. Museum of Natural History recently and urged members of the audience to make a trip (upstairs!) to see it.

Laurence Gillespie saw **two large flocks of Canada Geese** recently. John Cunningham saw **a large doe** near the Halifax Commons one morning in mid-Dec. He saw it jump a fence. On Jan. 2nd, Wendy McDonald saw **an Orange-crowned Warbler** at a suet feeder in Bedford. It had been reported on the Bedford-Sackville Christmas Bird Count, and Wendy and Bob went to check out its identity.

FEBRUARY

Bob McDonald reported on the Winter bird list; all birds observed during the three months Dec., Jan., and Feb. There are normally about 200 species seen in Nova Scotia during the winter. As of early Feb., the count was 202, still with a few weeks to go. He also referred to the 'dead-of-winter-list' (DOWL) for Feb. About 150 species are usually found on this list, and he reported that only seven days into the month the count already totalled 108. He reaffirmed that Nova Scotia is a great place to birdwatch – especially in winter.

Clarence Stevens reported a number rarities in the Sackville area. His feeders in Beaver Bank for Jan. included **two Pine Warblers**, **one Red Crossbill**, and **a Brown Creeper**. He said that Don and Lois Codling in Sackville currently have **three Pine Warblers**, **a pair of Northern Cardinals**, **two Red-bellied Woodpeckers**, **a Yellow-breasted Chat**, **one Baltimore Oriole**, and **a Northern Goshawk** at their feeders. **The Hoary Redpoll** which was present at their place earlier in Jan. appears to have gone. Sackville's First Lake, which is frozen most days, still has **an American Coot** visiting occasionally. It travels between there and parts unknown in the company of **American Black Ducks** and **Mallards**. **A Lesser Black-backed Gull** is a more regular visitor to the lake. As of Feb. 7th, **the Northern Mockingbird** was still present at Seawood Park in Lower Sackville. Clarence was unsure if **the Eastern Towhee** that was in Sackville was still present, but, as of Feb. 5th, Charlotte Hutchinson in North End Dartmouth had one attending her feeders. Earlier in January she also had **a Hoary Redpoll** and **a Yellow-breasted Chat**. Clarence told us that Feb. is the best month to start listening for singing birds – he said that for over a week now both **Northern Cardinals** and **Song Sparrows** had been singing, and by March they will be joined by several other species.

Janet Dalton reported **a flock of Bohemian Waxwings** using her back garden. There were approximately two dozen at 9:30 a.m. of the previous day, but by 10:30 she observed two dead in the snow. They appeared to have flown into a window. A cat came along, got one, but subsequently dropped it. Janet brought both to the meeting for people to see. Jean Hartley reported **a flock of 90 Common Redpolls** in her back garden. Peter Wells, visiting Jasper in mid-Dec., saw **a Grey Wolf** within a few metres of his car on the outskirts of Jasper Park Lodge. Stephanie Robertson reported seeing **a Robin** feeding on the berries on a neighbor's Christmas wreath in mid-Jan. Clarence Stevens advised that it was probably a northern (Newfoundland) Robin coming south for a visit. Leslie Jane Butters reported, in a similar vein, that **a Robin** had devoured a winter flower arrangement outside her front door! On Feb. 5th she saw **many Crows** in the air over the Waegwoltic Club. She said that in the evenings most of them leave the area and fly over Armdale on their way inland. On that particluar evening three groups of 25 to 30 individuals flew directly over her head. This was most unusual; she viewed it as a send-off to her recently departed mother, Doris, a keen HFN member for many years.

NEXT DEADLINE

21st of May for the June, 2013 Issue
Send contributions to 'Newsletter', c/o NS Museum of Natural History, or email submissions to sdhaythorn@ns.sympatico.ca