



# Nature Notes

By the Halifax Field Naturalists

## Food For Thought...Road Salt

A lot of salt is used each year in Canada to manage snow and ice; the Government of Canada reports about 5 million tons are applied to roads per year.

Salt, also known as sodium chloride, lowers the freezing point of water, to prevent and help melt ice, which improves safety on our roads and walkways; however, almost all the sodium and chloride ions dissolve into our waterways, through run off into storm drains and absorption into the soil, causing harm to freshwater ecosystems, plants and animals.

To try to better balance the benefit of salt for human safety, while fully acknowledging the effects on the environment, let's look at some ways we can minimize salt use...



Photo Credit: Radila Radilova via Canva

### TIPS TO REDUCE SALT

- Shovel. *Eliminate* snow and ice and the need for salt.
- Check the temperature (upcoming as well). If it's -10 C or below, salt won't be effective to manage ice.
- Use sand for *traction*; salt won't work for this. The dark colour of sand also absorbs more sunlight which assists in melting ice.
- Use less! A coffee mug full is about what you'd need for a city driveway (2 tbsp. per square metre).
- Sweep up any excess on bare ground & reuse!

Sources: Ottawa RIVERKEEPER, Gov. of Canada

## History Minute: How the HFN got its Start

The Halifax Field Naturalists (HFN) came about because a few Dalhousie graduate students wanted more field experiences than they were getting. The first meeting of the HFN was held on October 21, 1975 in the fifth floor lounge of the then new Biology Building.

In the beginning the group's name was Dalhousie Field Naturalists but not long after, the name was changed to the Halifax Field Naturalists. The executive thought this name would be less intimidating to the non-university people they wanted to attract.

## January Events

### LEACH'S PETROLS

These birds are not often seen because they spend most of their time at sea, and when they return to land to breed, it's on offshore islands. Rielle Hoeg, Birds Canada Atlantic Outreach Biologist, will discuss their identification, breeding & nesting habits, as well as how they are faring.

**Date:** Tues, January 21

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** NS Museum of Natural History  
1747 Summer St, Halifax  
(lower entrance)

### ANNUAL BIRD WALK

**Date:** Sat. January 25

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Sullivan's Pond,  
Dartmouth. Meet at  
Nowlan St. parking lot, off  
of Prince Albert Rd.

**Duration:** 4 hours

Local bird authority Fulton Lavender will lead us through some well known and not so well known bird watching sites. Dress warmly, bring binoculars and a thermos with a hot drink. Registration is required; limit of 20 people.

For more info on nature walks, talks & conservation check us out at:

<https://halifaxfieldnaturalists.ca/>

Follow us on social!

