



N.B. Naturalist

Vol. 5, Nos. 2-3 December 1974

An apology but not a eulogy! Yes we are still alive! To adequately apologize we would have to prepare an issue three times the size and include all those items that have gathered in our (by now) somewhat dusty file. Alas, that is not feasible (wait till January), nor is it possible to explain in a few sentences the long silence. Let's just ask all you patient (or not so patient) members to forgive us and pledge to do a better job in the future.

Despite our inactivity in the publishing field, the federation and its members have been active and we have reports of some of those activities, as well as nature articles for your interest and enjoyment. The Christmas story should put you in the right mood for the coming season for which we send warmest wishes of a Merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Editorial Committee

O CHRISTMAS TREE!

Mary Majka

On your walk today you found a cone - soft, shiny, smooth. It fits the palm of your hand and has the smell of Christmas. You think of candles, carols, cookies, and kids and suddenly the snow is welcome!

In the warmth of your hand, the little cone becomes more fragrant and, on coming home, a little, winged seed flutters down through your fingers. A tiny, sticky droplet of pitch on angel wings - a Christmas tree baby! You think of chickadees and grosbeaks, crossbills and squirrels and curiously lift the scales of the cone to discover a whole nursery. Snuggled against the cone's candle shaft, row upon row of seeds await a warm and windy day, when, released, they will whirl down to find a place, each to grow a giant. The competition will be fierce and the survival low.

Looking over the forest floor, you will see a kindergarten of hopefuls, each a perfect miniature tree, lovely to touch, too beautiful to step on. Soon, those children of the forest will grow into strapping youngsters, but only those who find a ray of sun will prosper, sending tiers of radiating branches upwards toward the sky. With the precision of nature, they will bloom in spring and fruit in the fall. Mists of yellow pollen, their security in numbers, waft through the forest en route to rosy pistils and immortality.

And so, the time has come for teenagers to be chosen. One of them may find his way to your home. The lovely balsam fir or the young red pine will likely be

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your preference, since both have the good manners to keep their needles to themselves.

One wintry day I brought a small tree to my firstborn son for his first Christmas and as I passed his tiny fingers through the soft needles he reached out towards a nest hidden in the branches - a gift of the tree to us! Many Christmases have passed since, but the magic of that moment can never be surpassed.

Why did we adopt a tree as a symbol of joy, peace and good will? Why does a tree in our home convey the meaning of the festive season, the coming light, the birth of a Child?

Maybe because our own existence is deeply rooted in the simple, essential and elementary things akin to the rocky soil in which the tree was anchored. In its tenacity and strength is our hope; in its green radiance the assurance of sustenance; in its symmetry and growth the law and order of nature; in its seeds the continuity of life.

And so my wish to you, for this holiday season, is to find a cone on your walk and to look for a nest in your Christmas tree! (Reprinted from Museum Memo, Dec. 1973.)

1974 Annual Meeting, Fundy Park

About 60 persons participated in the NBFN Annual Meeting program, Sept. 13-15 at Fundy Park. Fortunately, the dense fog and rain of Friday evening cleared up late Saturday morning and the remainder of the activities took place in superb weather which allowed a most enjoyable federation picnic at Micmac Camping Area Saturday evening.

Among the activities was a slide program on Fundy Park as seen from its trail system (presented for Michael Burzynski by Steve Clayden); workshops on insects (Chris Hajka); nature photography (Sylvia Ulanis) and pond life (David Christie); a talk on the spruce budworm (Henrik Deichmann and D. Christie) followed by a general discussion of various types of budworm control programs and the film "Tides of Fundy."

Participants had the choice of two out of four field trips: budworm forests (Deichmann), the tidal shore (Christie), the Albert County coast (Mary Hajka) and Martin Head (Deichmann). A visit was also made to the Devil's Half Acre, a mysterious area of geological interest.

At the annual business meeting, the president reported on activities of the past year, including presentation of briefs on Mount Carleton Provincial Park and on Japanese whaling; a congratulatory letter and offer of assistance to the provincial government following its announced intention to adopt an act to protect endangered species, and action taken re the shooting of kingfishers at fish hatcheries, the burning of vegetation on Machias Seal Island, a heron colony threatened by lumbering, and trapping methods. Mention was also made of federation field trips and of the Atlantic Naturalists' Policy Session organized in April.

Committees at work include ones studying birds of prey (continuing), coastal zone protection and land use, the Fundy Vacation Trail and expansion of Fundy Park, and awards for science teachers and/or students.

It was announced how pleased the federation is about formation of the Kennebecasis Naturalists' Society and that groups at Bathurst, Nackawic and Stanley were interested in starting clubs too.

The treasurer reported that the federation had a cash balance of \$986.18, made up of \$622.51 forward from 1973, plus 1974 income of \$659.03, less 1974 expenditures of \$295.36. C. Eric Tull was appointed auditor for the year 1974.

Four amendments to the NBFN constitution were adopted, a) Creating a category of honorary life members, b) making the two New Brunswick directors of the Canadian Nature Federation ex-officio members of the NBFN board, c) altering the qualification

for directors-at-large to give eligibility to federated club members who reside remote from their club and d) lengthening the period of notice for the annual general meeting to 8 weeks, from 30 days.

Mary Majka, chairman of the nominating committee, announced new members of the board, all elected by acclamation. They are vice-president, Henrik Deichmann of Alma, secretary, Art Ruitenberg of Sussex and director-at-large, Wilma Miller of Nictau.

The meeting then elected Bruce S. Wright of Fredericton as an honorary life member of the federation, in recognition of his work in publicizing many conservation problems including the endangered status of the Eastern Panther, and of his contribution to public knowledge of New Brunswick natural history through his many books and articles. - D.C.

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR FOR 1973

To Members of the N. B. Federation of Naturalists:

I have examined the financial statement and the supporting records of the N.B. Federation of Naturalists, as prepared by the Treasurer, for the period December 1, 1972 to December 31, 1973.

I am in complete agreement with the figures shown.

Jim Wilson
Jim Wilson, auditor.

Financial Statement, Dec. 1, 1972 to Dec. 31, 1973

<u>Income</u>			
Subscriptions for 1973		380	
regular	\$2.00	324	\$ 648.00
reduced	1.50	17	25.50
reduced	1.00	11	11.00
student	1.00	12	12.00
reduced student	0.75	2	1.50
library	2.00	14	28.00
Subscriptions for 1974		27	
regular	\$2.00	26	52.00
student	1.00	1	1.00
Donations			102.00
Interest			12.07
Bank Exchange			0.80
Annual Meeting - Banquet & donations			105.05
			<u>\$998.92</u>
			\$ 998.92
<u>Disbursements</u>			
N.B. Naturalist			\$125.30
Printing			7.60
Treasurer's Supplies			8.89
Symbol Campaign			1.94
Postage			79.40
Motel Rental (founding meeting)			23.97
Annual Meeting - supplies			37.42
Annual Meeting - banquet			71.89
Annual Meeting - Room rental			20.00
			<u>\$376.41</u>
			\$ 376.41
<u>Balance</u> (equals bank balance Dec. 31, 1973)			\$ 622.51

Eric Tull

Eric Tull, Treasurer

ATLANTIC NATURALISTS' POLICY SESSION

From April 5 to 7, the N.B. Federation of Naturalists sponsored the Atlantic Naturalists' Policy Session at Magnetic Hill. Twenty-five delegates representing the Newfoundland Natural History Society, P.E.I. Natural History Society, N.S. Bird Society, N.B.F.N., Canadian Nature Federation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada met to discuss their conservation concerns and priorities and to establish a strategy of action on important issues as they relate to Atlantic Canada. The meeting was made possible in part by a citizen development grant from the department of the Secretary of State.

An inter-provincial committee was set up to study the feasibility and format of a proposed naturalists' guide to the Atlantic Provinces, a book which would describe the region's natural history and point out interesting areas to visit.

Each organization reported on its interests and programs and there was considerable discussion of the activities of the C.N.F. and the contents of its magazine, Nature Canada. Hopefully, each group will benefit from a better knowledge of the others and that a closer relationship and cooperation among them will develop.

A great range of concerns was discussed at the meeting. It would be impossible to mention them all in the scope of this newsletter. Talk concentrated on a number of areas and fifteen recommendations were approved and directed to the Board of Directors of the participating organizations. These recommendations were:-

ENERGY

1. That C.N.F. develop a policy on energy use in Canada. We suggest that it should recommend a limiting of the energy consumption rate and that it include a preference rating among alternative methods available for electric power generation.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

1. That C.N.F. and the provincial organizations attach high priority to developing educational programs for youth.
2. That, as soon as feasible, the C.N.F. institute a "youth division" with the idea of establishing a junior nature program with its own magazine and of providing information and guidance to schools and youth groups in the field of environmental education and awareness.
3. That the C.N.F. assist provincial and local groups in the establishment and promotion of nature camps and clubs for children and of nature centres for school children and the general public.
4. That provincial groups work closely with their provincial education systems to encourage development of improved natural history programs in the schools. Emphasis should be given to better teacher training in that field.
5. That local groups be encouraged to establish activity-oriented junior nature clubs.

PROTECTION OF NATURAL AREAS

1. That establishment of natural area reserves be considered a priority concern of the C.N.F. and the provincial organizations.
2. That each provincial organization meet soon with its regional committee of IBP-CI to prepare a list of areas that can be recommended as reserves and to establish priorities based on habitat type, individual site and vulnerability.
3. That the list so produced, with priorities and related information be communicated to the Nature Conservancy of Canada as a guideline for its action and that the provincial groups cooperate with it in its acquisition programs. The Nature Conservancy, having acquired title, can then transfer the areas,

under suitable protective agreements, to a government agency or local organization.

4. That the C.N.F. act as a coordinating agency, promoting cooperation between the provincial organizations and the Nature Conservancy and facilitating the exchange of information on natural area preservation.
5. That the C.N.F. and the provincial groups urge the governments of the Atlantic Provinces to speed action towards adoption of an ecological reserve act in each province.

ANIMAL HARVESTING

1. That C.N.F. prepare policy statements on the consumptive use of animal resources (e.g. hunting, fishery, trapping, collection of biological specimens). We suggest that those activities be regarded as the legitimate harvesting of a renewable natural resource when there is proper management and control of harvest and population levels. We recommend, as far as possible, the total use of animals taken (i.e. reduction of waste) and the promotion of the most humane and effective harvest methods feasible. Notwithstanding the preceding, we feel that the C.N.F. should generally advocate non-consumptive use of wildlife.
2. That the C.N.F. produce a national policy statement on rare and endangered species and forms and provide assistance to the provincial groups in their efforts to gain protection of such species in their provinces.
3. That the provincial groups prepare lists of rare and endangered species and forms in their area and press for provincial action to protect them.

GENERAL

1. That all organizations make an effort to compliment governments whenever positive actions are taken or proposed in matters of concern to us. The provincial organizations should especially remember to inform the C.N.F. of any such actions of national significance by their provincial government, so that an appropriate letter can be sent from the C.N.F. and so that the matter may be included in the yellow pages of Nature Canada.

NATURE NEWS (WINTER 73-74)

The past winter was a relatively short and open one, at least in southern and central New Brunswick. December's very mild and wet weather (5° to 9° above normal) was followed by two sunny months, slightly colder and drier than usual. Low snow depths in much of the province meant an easy winter for many kinds of wildlife but, on the other hand, permitted deep frost penetration which could be hard on hibernating animals and some species of plants. Northern parts of the province had normal snowfall accumulations during the winter. A four-day warm spell during which the temperature reached 61° at Fredericton on March 7 moved the ice in places along the lower Saint John River and brought spring migrants to the southern counties abnormally early. Winter, however, was not gone for good and on the average, that month was cold in most areas.

Some weather highlights of the winter: Fredericton had its warmest December (30° mean) in 103 years of records; Saint John topped its December precipitation record at 9.88"; a mere 3" of snow fell at Moncton in December; a few severe thunderstorms, unusual in winter, occurred in the southern counties during January and early February; sunshine totals (161-166 hours) were well above normal during February at Fredericton, Chatham and Charlo.

MANUALS

A new species of mammal, the Coyote, seems fairly well established in New Brunswick. During the winter five large wild dogs were taken in the province. First, one was trapped near Florenceville. On Feb. 16 Bill Miller hit one with his truck

near the Serpentine River and about the same time one was shot at Lac Baker. During March one was trapped not far from Hampton and another at Fredericton Road near Salisbury. At the Serpentine River, fresh tracks were found a week after the one had been killed. The Coyote, or brush wolf as it is also known, has been spreading slowly eastward during this century. The N.B. Museum has the skin of an animal, believed to be a Coyote, that was trapped in Kent County during winter 1948, and there have been a number of sightings reported in the past 2 or 3 years. However, without the skull to examine it is often difficult to distinguish between coyotes, wolves, some wild dogs and hybrids amongst them. Skulls obtained this winter by the provincial Fish & Wildlife Branch and the museum were examined by an Ontario biologist, who classified the Lac Baker, Florenceville and Hampton specimens as Coyotes and the other two as dog-coyote hybrids, often called coydogs. Such cross-breeding occurs quite frequently in Ontario. Probably Coyotes will be increasing and spreading further in the province. We would like to hear when you see your first one.

Two small bats (Little Brown?) were flying about in 45° temperatures on the unusual date of Dec. 16 at Herring Cove in Fundy Park. (Henrik Deichmann)

BIRDS

The results of the Christmas Bird Counts reported in our last number give a good idea of distribution and abundance of most birds. There was little change as winter progressed, except for the disappearance of most of the lingering summer species when the temperature dropped during January.

Christmas Bird Count Addenda - Wills MacCoubrey advises that she inadvertently omitted some birds from her count. A Baltimore Oriole and a Cardinal on count day and Turkey Vulture, Purple Sandpiper and Purple Finch during count period should be added to the report from the St. Andrews area.

A Great Cormorant appeared in open water at Dalhousie Jan. 26-31 (Jean-Paul Lebel).

A few Canada Geese were moving about in mid-winter: a small flock flew over Garnett Settlement, east of Loch Lomond early in January (Mrs. Graves), 25 were at Browns Flat Jan. 7 (George Anderson), a group at nearby Oak Pt. Jan. 28 (Lloyd Boyes & Mike Deddall), and at Sackville about 25 were seen Feb. 17 (fido Ian Cameron). About 100 Brent wintered at White Head Island (Nancy Small), which they have done every winter since 1962.

A male Wood Duck was seen at Fillmore Hole, near Sackville March 3 (Con Desplaque). No Common Mergansers remained through the winter at Bathurst because of heavier ice conditions than usual, but 37 were back at the mouth of the Nepisiquit Mar. 19 (Blake Maher). A large flock, 150+ of them, were at the Reversing Falls Feb. 17 (Cecil Johnston) and 31 were counted below the causeway at Moncton Mar. 3 (Doug Whiteman). A single male Barrow's Goldeneye was with 56 Common Goldeneyes and a Common Merganser in the Tobique at Nictau Feb. 26 (Christie). Other Barrows included 4 at Somerville Feb. 23 (Donald Kimball) and 1 at Douglas Mar. 9 (Beverley Schneider).

A Cooper's Hawk apparently passed the winter at Monramcook, being seen Jan. 11 and 13 and Feb. 10 by Reid Hollanus. Red-tailed Hawks included one at Somerville Feb. 15-16 (Kimball). A winter Marsh Hawk was seen at Hammond River Jan. 5 (Jim Wilson). Three Gymfalcons were reported, a dark bird at Bridgedale, Albert Co. Jan. 17 (Dr. M. Majka), a grayish bird at Saint John Mar. 20 (Christie) and a white one at Black Brook, Victoria County Apr. 17 (Don Fowler).

About 7 Herring Gulls spent December and January at Upper Woodstock (Rowena MacDonald) and 3 were at Centreville Jan. 15 (Wes Knafter).

Mid-winter reports of Snowy Owls were all from the Tantramar area except for one at Petit-Rocher Feb. 5 (Allen Eisiger). 5 Short-eared Owls were seen at Monram-

cock Mar. 3 (McManus).

The largest flock of Purple Sandpipers ever reported here was a remarkable 2000 seen at Indian Point, St. Andrews by Red Mason on Jan. 3. The following day only a more normal 175 were present there. A Killdeer was at White Head Jan. 1-5 (Lester Carroll).

A Northern Three-toed Woodpecker was seen in woods near the mouth of the Northwest Miramichi Feb. 10 (Harry Walker). The more common Black-backed Three-toed was also reported from the Newcastle area and at Hammond River and Cambridge.

Four Bohemian Waxwings turned up at Belmont, Saint John Jan. 30 (Ray Tanton) and in Sackville, 2 were seen Feb. 6-7 (Curtis Wood) and 4 on the 17th (Duchemin).

On Mar. 10 a cat killed Doug Whitman's Hockingbird which had been around since early December at Riverview. A single Hockingbird has been a winter specialty of that area for several years.

A Magnolia Warbler appeared at Gordon Burn's feeder in Sackville on the very unusual date of Dec. 6. Four Myrtle Warblers were still surviving at Cape Tormentine Jan. 23 (Stuart Tingley). A lingering E. Meadowlark was at Cambridge Dec. 7-8.

Wilma Miller reports at least 1500 Evening Grosbeaks around her place at Nictau early in December. They disappeared later in the month. All six Cardinals in the Saint John area apparently passed the winter successfully at bird feeders, but Reid McManus' bird at Memramcook was not seen after Jan. 25. On Jan. 23 a Cardinal appeared at a bird feeder in Oromocto (Mrs. Watling). A male Rufous-sided Towhee spent the whole winter at Vivien Fowler's feeder in Hampton and a Field Sparrow lingered at Fundy Park till Dec. 13 (Deichmann). David S. Christie

Canadian Nature Federation Annual Meeting

C. Eric Tull

The fourth annual general meeting of the Canadian Nature Federation was held in London, Ontario, August 21 to 27. As a provincial director I attended the meeting representing New Brunswick, even though I am now living in Edmonton.

At the meeting last year at Wolfville, there was a feeling of tension, produced, I feel, by the concern of members over the financial picture. The financial picture is now much better and the feeling at both the general meeting and the meeting of directors was much more relaxed. Everyone seemed to feel it was a very successful meeting.

Before the general meeting the directors engaged in a two-day meeting. I will try to mention some of the highlights of this wide-ranging meeting.

Ted Mosquin, the executive director, reported on the activities of head office in Ottawa. Membership in CNF is now about 15,000. The magazine Nature Canada is still the centre of head office activities. The bookstore is growing by leaps and bounds. Financial limitations have prevented the federation from getting very actively involved in environmental issues as yet, but this is envisioned to occur within the next year or two.

Robert Carswell, the treasurer, reported on finances. The operating deficit for the fiscal period ending December 31, 1973 was \$7,881, a reduction from the operating deficit of \$48,630 of the previous fiscal period. A balanced budget has been struck for the current fiscal year, and the federation was basically on budget as of June 30.

Directors in the Montreal area are actively soliciting funds to cover the cost of producing a French edition of Nature Canada. As envisioned, the white pages would be the same in both editions, with English articles translated into French or vice versa, while the yellow pages would concentrate more on French Canada, in particular Quebec.

The directors moved to make the ownership and management of natural areas an important objective of the federation. In this, they expect to co-operate with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and with provincial and local naturalist groups.

The directors also adopted guidelines for the adoption of policy for CNF. One area that should be investigated in the next year is CNF policy on whaling.

In order to escape from the present financial restrictions, an experienced fund raiser is to be hired for one year to conduct a fund-raising campaign.

On Friday afternoon there was an open meeting between members and directors, in which the members had a chance to express their concerns to the directors. One concern in particular, a national youth program, was discussed in considerable detail. A national nature magazine for young people gained considerable momentum from this meeting.

Saturday morning was the business meeting and a special meeting required by law to change the name of the federation to Canadian Nature Federation - Fédération canadienne de la Nature. The directors then met to elect the following new executive for the upcoming year:-

President, Ian McLaren (N.S.); Vice-Presidents, Tony LeSauter (Que.); Martin Edwards (Ont.); Gordon Hall (Man.); and George Scotter (Alta.); secretary, Gerald McKeating (Ont.); and treasurer, Robert Carswell (Que.).

Saturday afternoon and Sunday were the programme of the meeting, devoted to the theme "Nature and Urban Man." Amongst other papers, former New Brunswick resident, Tony Erskine, gave a very interesting talk on work he has done on censuses of winter birds in urban and suburban districts of Ottawa.

As at all meetings there were a number of interesting field trips, to such noted places as the Bruce Trail and Point Pelee, as well as areas closer to London. In all it was a most interesting meeting.

Next year's meeting will be held in June in Victoria, B.C., so start now to make your plans to attend. It would be well worth it (especially with all those exotic west coast birds).

My term as a provincial director has another year to run. I will endeavour to keep up with things in New Brunswick, particularly by maintaining close ties with the N.B. Federation of Naturalists. The other New Brunswick director is David Smith of Saint John. If you have things that you want to bring to our attention, please do not hesitate to write. Our addresses are Eric Tull, c/o LGL #201, 10110 124 St., Edmonton, Alta., and David F. Smith, 149 Douglas Avenue, Saint John, N.B.

The Canadian Nature Federation is a membership organization operated for and by its members. If you, as a member of CNF, want to help the federation to become the active voice of Canadian naturalists, might I suggest any of the followings:-

- 1) Promote the federation and the magazine Nature Canada. We need all the members we can get. Maybe you know someone who would become a member if you were to show them your copy of the magazine.
- 2) If you have some particular expertise and would like to assist the federation in this field, let me know.
- 3) Communicate to your directors your interests and concerns in the federation.

Tintamarre National Wildlife Area
Stuart Tingloy

The 4,000 acre Tintamarre N.W.A. is located at the head of the Tantramar Marshes approximately five miles north-east of the town of Sackville, N.B. The area

encompasses extensive boglands, marshlands and the basins of three lakes, locally known as the Jolicure Lakes.

Waterfowl and the Tantramar Marshes have historically had a close association. The name Tantramar is an adaptation of the original French spelling "Tintamarre", a word meaning racket or hubbub in reference to the noise of great flocks of waterfowl utilizing the marshland during migration periods.

The great expanses of tidal marshlands at the head of the Bay of Fundy impressed the early French traders who began to settle in the area by 1672. The early settlers diked the marshes, a few acres at a time, and practised a profitable beef raising enterprise.

From the early French period to present day, man has steadily reduced the amount of wetland habitat available for waterfowl. Diking and ditching practices have now forced the wildfowl to rather restricted areas at the uppermost limits of the marsh area. Declining amounts of wetland habitat, along with increasing hunting pressure have greatly reduced the numbers of breeding and migrant waterfowl on the Tantramar.

The marshland complex is located on one of the major "lanes" of the Atlantic Flyway. Thus, maintenance of adequate wetland habitat is essential to the perpetuation of the area's wildfowl resource.

The Jolicure Lakes area was proposed for acquisition by the Canadian Wildlife Service in December 1966. Actual acquiring of lands within the area commenced in the spring of 1968. The 4,000 acres of land within the wildlife area represent a wide variety of habitat types, including some of the best waterfowl production habitat to be found in eastern New Brunswick. The area contains a striking variety of peatland and aquatic ecosystems in various successional stages, many that are rare and unique ecological communities. These features qualify the National Wildlife Area as an area of outstanding potential for research and instruction on the properties and dynamics of a wetland landscape.

The area is managed by a Federal-Provincial Management Committee. The committee, organized in 1968, prepared a five-year development plan for the area. The plan has provision for development and re-establishment of wetlands, water control structures, preservation of unique habitat types, public use, and recommendations for water level manipulations. Through the co-operative efforts of Ducks Unlimited (Canada) development of the site is now complete. During the period 1968-1973 Ducks Unlimited installed four major water control structures and nine smaller ones, along with miles of dikes. That authority has been responsible for the control of water levels throughout the MML and the establishment of six impoundments, each with its own flood and draw-down facility.

The rich diversity of wetlands within the area provides favourable habitat for many aquatic bird species. Annually over 60 broods of waterfowl are produced on the area, which includes Black Duck, Pintail, Blue and Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Wigeon and Shoveler. Pied-billed Grebe, Sora and Virginia Rail are abundant and several broods of American Coot have been observed on the impoundments. Black Tern frequent the area and are presumed to nest there. Both Short and Long-billed Marsh Wrens, almost unknown elsewhere in the Maritime Provinces, breed in the area.

The area is easily accessible to naturalists and good walking is afforded by the dikes and access roads. A richly rewarding experience awaits those who seek out the elusive rails, marsh wrens, and waterfowl on a summer's evening.

Chignecto Weekend

The Chignecto Naturalists' Club hosted a successful and very enjoyable joint outing of the N.B. Federation of Naturalists and N.S. Bird Society June 29-July 1.

The three days included birding, botanical and seashell excursions to a variety of wetland types in the Sackville-Amherst and Cape Tormentine areas. Focal point of the weekend was the fascinating Tintamarre Nat'l Wildlife Area described above.

NATURE NEWS (SPRING 1974)

David Christie

Birds

There were two main highlights of spring migration, the stress and mortality that affected many birds during the abnormally cold last half of May and the huge numbers of Evening Grosbeaks noted in April. Also of interest was the very early return of some songbirds to southern New Brunswick during the warm spell in the first ten days of March.

Until the 18th, May was not a bad month weatherwise, but then it seemed like winter had returned. Daily high temperatures often didn't get much above 40° and there was cold rain and a few snowfalls. As a result insects, especially the flying types, were not active and it was very difficult for insectivorous birds to find food. With a continuing scarcity of food and the stress of cold weather, after a few days birds were beginning to be found dead-- especially warblers, swallows and Least Flycatchers. Most common among dead warblers brought to the museum were Yellow-rumped ("Myrtle"), Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Black-and-White, Cape May, Canada, Parula and Tennessee. Mortality continued to occur into the first days of June.

The weakened birds, often absurdly tame (not enough strength to be otherwise), gave birdwatchers and photographers many opportunities for close-up observation, as they flitted slowly about looking for food on the ground. Birds in difficulty were reported commonly from Hartland to Moncton and southwards, but not at Bathurst (Blake Maher) where apparently fewer warblers were present at that time. Heavy mortality was also reported in Nova Scotia, Maine and eastern Ontario. Later, we will report more details concerning Breeding Bird Surveys in the Maritimes which revealed significant decreases of several insectivorous birds during June.

Excerpts from the reports of two observers will serve to indicate the kind of observations being made this spring. Joan Hoyt at Bloomfield had over 40 warblers of various species in the elm tree near her house May 17, 18 and 19. In the following week she found dead Parula, Wilson's and Blackburnian Warblers in her yard. On May 21 she recorded an influx of Parulas and wrote, "Usually they are in the trees fairly high up but this day they were hopping around on the grass and we could approach within two or three feet of them." Wills MacCoubrey writes of a trip out the Joe's Point Road, as far as the golf course at St. Andrews on May 20:

"It was sunny, but the temperature 40° and a cold north wind blowing. On the fairways adjoining the Sunbury Shores property I saw that the ground was swarming with warblers. I covered most of the 18-hole course, and found conditions the same all over.

"Many golfers were out and the birds merely moved ^{aside} as they passed and continued to hunt for food. There was one Baltimore Oriole, quite a few thrushes along the edges, and also Chippies, Song Sparrows and Savannahs.

"Before I finally started for home I had seen 66 species of birds, 17 species of warblers: 6 Black-and-White, 45 Tennessee, 20 Nashville, 60 Parula, 8 Yellow, 14 Magnolia, 18 Cape May, 4 Black-throated Blue, 400 Myrtle, 8 Black-throated Green, 1 Blackburnian, 12 Chestnut-sided, 1 Bay-breasted, 2 Ovenbird, 1 Waterthrush, 1 Wilson's and 8 Redstart."

With such weather conditions occurring, it is not surprising that there was much mortality of Purple Martins, a very sensitive species affected by cool, wet spells, even during July. Enid Inch writes that there were heavy losses in all the Washademoak, Gagetown and Grand Lake colonies. The toll included 81 dead at Hazen Robertson's colony at Robertson Point, 20 at Gerald Smith's, Lower Cambridge, 18, perhaps as many as 35, at Niven Thorne's, Cambridge. Later in June the Washademoak colonies built up about as many birds as before, mostly late-arriving young of the previous year, but the colonies at Gagetown remained empty.

Particular comment on the Evening Grosbeak came from Saint John where the museum was flooded with telephone calls on April 13 (the first calls about then came Apr.10); from White Head, "greatest migration of Evening Grosbeaks in memory--beginning Apr.11" (Nancy Small); from Tide Head, "the grosbeaks come in the dining room if we place seeds on the inside window sill" (Alan Madden); from Dalhousie, "the bird spectacular of the spring... fed close to homes all over town without fear of man or beast" (Jean-Paul Lebel); from Lamèque, where they first appeared Apr.12, "containes... la première année ils sont ici en si grands nombres" (Rose-Aline Chiasson). Large flocks were also reported, at least briefly, at Fredericton and Cambridge. In Saint John, as in Dalhousie, the grosbeaks were all over town, including even the city core where residents who seldom see a bird more colourful than a sooty pigeon, were amazed by the beautiful yellow, black and white male grosbeaks.

The early March warm spell prompted numerous birds to begin migrating, not only the usual early birds like Canada Goose, Horned Lark, Common Crow and Starling but also significant numbers of Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds and a few Killdeer, Am. Robins, Rusty Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds and Song Sparrows. Some, at least, of these birds appeared north and east to southern Carleton County, Moncton and Sackville. Most of the blackbirds were recorded Mar. 6-11, for example Red-wings: 2 at Cambridge Mar. 6 (Nelson Thorne & Elva McConnachie), 30 at Douglas Mar. 7 (Beverley Schneider), 4 at Memramcook Mar. 8 (Reid McManus) and two flocks of 125-150 each at Beauséjour Mar. 9 (Nettie Moore); and Grackles: 14 at Lorneville Mar. 6 (David Clark), 4 at Geary (Gayl Hipperson) and 1 at Riverview (Doug Whitman) Mar. 7, many in the N.B.-N.S. border region Mar. 8-10 (Stuart Tingley) and 21 at Woodstock Mar.10 (Marjorie Gray).

So many interesting observations were reported that it is impossible to quote all of even the most deserving, but I would like to stress that all reports submitted are welcomed and are filed and kept available for future reference here at the museum. The following are just a selection of the interesting reports.

The southern herons and allies again made a showing though it was not a record year. Three Cattle Egrets during May 1 through June 1, 5 Snowy Egrets Apr.20 to May 7, and 19 Glossy Ibis Apr.27 to June 2, all were seen in the southern third of the province. The more rare Great Egret was also found; 1 at Lorneville May 5 (Denise, Doris & Cecil Johnston). Another of that beautiful species was seen just outside the province at John Lubby Nat'l Wildlife Area, N.S. May 1-11 (various Chignecto Club members).

During April flocks of 5-17 Snow Geese (white phase) were observed at White Head (fide Small), Harvey, Albert Co. (Moncton Nat. Club) and Inkerman (Chiasson) as well as at John Lubby NW, N.S. (Tingley). A single, late, white bird was at Eel River Bar May 22 (Lebel) and two blue phase ("Blue Goose") Snows were seen: 1 at Harvey Mar.23 (Majkas *et al.*) and 1 at Kent Island May 12 (Charles Huntington).

Ducks of interest included a pair of Gadwall at Red Head Marsh, Saint John, Apr.30 (Jim Wilson) and later and a male at Eel River Bar May 31 (Lebel). Shovelers were reported at several places in southern N.B., especially around the Tentmaker area, and also at Eel River Crossing where there were 3 males and a female May 20-23 (Lebel). Two reports of Redhead were of a pair at Lower Sheffield May 11 (Peter Pearce *et al.*) and a male at Cape Jourimain, near Cape Tormentine, May 19 (Christie *et al.*) Three Ruddy Ducks returned to the sewage lagoon at Saint John West Apr.23 and four were present through May (Johnstons *et al.*). Two Harlequin Ducks were omitted by mistake from my winter report. They were in somewhat unusual localities, a male at Cape Tormentine Jan. 23-30 (Tingley *et al.*) and another male in the muddy waters of Courtenay Bay, Saint John, Jan.23-25 (Wilson & Johnston).

A Turkey Vulture was at Bloomfield Apr.21 (J. & C. Wilson & Johnston), a Red-shouldered Hawk at Pocologan May 3 (Moore) and an adult Peregrine Falcon at Eel River Bar Apr.15 (Lebel).

An amazingly large spring movement of Short-billed Dowitchers was noted by Nettie Moore and Willa MacCoubrey on May 22 when they saw 200 at Pocologan, 200 at Little Lepreau, 190 at Chance Harbour, 40 at Upper Hampstead and 23 at Jomsog. No one else reported any large flocks and Nettie and Willa, covering the same area three days later,

saw absolutely no dowitchers. An Upland Sandpiper at Eel River Bar May 3 (Lebel) is the first northern N.B. record. An unusual inland, spring Dunlin, in breeding plumage, was at Lower Jemseg May 19 (various observers). Two female Wilson's Phalaropes were seen, one at Eel River Bar May 12-13 (Lebel) and one at Newcastle May 26 (Harry Walker).

Five to six Little Gulls were at Eel River Bar from May 15 on and a Caspian Tern was there May 31 and June 7 (Lebel). A good number of Mourning Doves were seen, including an early one at Midwood, Saint John East, on Mar. 19 (Marjorie Duffy). An exceedingly early Tree Swallow at White Head Mar. 23 (Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Zwicker) must have been carried north by a stream of warm air. Ironically, others of that species were dying from the cold a full two months later. Next earliest date was Apr. 17 when Tree Swallows were reported in several places.

Twelve Brown Thrashers reported, the earliest Apr. 30, included two in northern N.B., at Dalhousie May 20 (Elizebeth Mott) and at Newcastle (Winnie, Lyle & Ian Walker), but all 9 Mockingbirds were near the Bay of Fundy. In my winter summary I omitted mentioning a thrasher that Marguerite Hope had in Chartersville, Dieppe, Jan. 14-16.

Perhaps the most unusual report received this spring is of two male Varied Thrushes spending half an hour on a lawn at North Head May 16 (Mrs. Addison Neves) - unusual because that is a Pacific slope bird found only three times previously in New Brunswick, very unusual because of the date (Varied Thrushes in the east usually disappear by late March) and because there were two birds.

A late Bohemian Waxwing was at Saint John West Apr. 20-21 (Jan Dexter) and 2 Loggerhead Shrikes at Red Head Apr. 12 (Michael Rigby). A male Yellow-rumped Warbler fitting the description of the western subspecies memorabilis ("Audubon's Warbler") was reported at Kennebecasis Park May 19-20 (fide Joyce Golden). Our best record yet for a Connecticut Warbler was a singing male observed by Jean-Paul Lebel at Eel River Bar June 7. Previous reports have been of female-plumaged birds with which it is possible to confuse the small percentage of Mourning Warblers that have eye-rings. A female Oporornis at Nachias Seal Island June 10 fit the description of MacGillivray's Warbler, but it may just have been a Mourning Warbler retaining the broken eye-ring of immature plumage.

A male Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Stoney Creek May 29 (Mary Fowmes) and a female Orchard Oriole was there May 17 (var. obs.) Another Orchard, a young male was at Sandy Point, Saint John, in late May (Margaret Patterson). A very early male Scarlet Tanager was seen in Saint John Apr. 13 (Janet Dunbrack). The overwintering Cardinals were seen until mid and late April, then disappeared. Two others were reported, at Gondola Point from mid-April to early May (fide Wilson) and at Rothesay May 23 (Mrs. W.R. Mathers). Seven Rufous-sided Towhees between Apr. 23 and May 20 included a pair at Upper Coverdale May 18-19 (E.A. Dixon). An "Ipswich Sparrow" was seen at Cape Enrage May 14 (Deichmann et al.) Following last year's first three provincial records of the Clay-coloured Sparrow, a singing male was observed May 19 at Fredericton (Pearce, Andy Dean & Owen Washburn). White-crowned Sparrows staged an impressive migration this year. In the Dalhousie area they were seen May 14 to June 1, peaking about May 21 when one could easily see over 100 a day (Lebel). One Whitecrown that appeared at Cambridge in mid-February passed the rest of the winter there (McConnachie & Inch).

Reports of amphibians, fishes, flora will be included in the next number.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, DEC. 14-31, 1974

This year, Christmas Bird Counts should be conducted on one day during the period Dec. 14 to 31. The census area should fit within a 15-mile diameter circle. Join your local count or if there isn't an established one get together with friends and start a new one. Counts of 6 hours or more duration will be published in the N.B. Naturalist.

Last year counts were made at Riley Brook, Plaster Rock, Grand Falls, Perth-Andover, Hartland, Woodstock, Stanley, Nectaquac, Fredericton, Jemseg, Cambridge, Hampton, Dalhousie, Lamèque, Newcastle-Chatham, Kouchibouguac Park, Cape Tormentine, Sackville, Moncton, Fundy Park, St. Martins, Saint John, Lopreau, Pennfield, St. Andrews, Eastport-Campobello and Grand Manan.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - NEW BRUNSWICK

Area: _____ (Within 15 mi. diameter circle)
 Date: _____ Time: _____ a.m. to _____ p.m. Weather: _____
 temp.: _____ wind: _____, _____ mph. Ground & water conditions: _____
 _____ Observers in _____ parties; _____ at feeders.
 Total party hours, _____ (_____ on foot, _____ by car); total party miles _____ (_____ on foot,
 _____ by car). No. Species _____; No. Birds _____; Compiler: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Common Loon	<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull	<input type="checkbox"/> Bohemian Waxwing
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Loon	<input type="checkbox"/> Black-headed Gull	<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Grebe	<input type="checkbox"/> Black-legged Kittiwake	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shrike
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Grebe	<input type="checkbox"/> Razorbill	<input type="checkbox"/> Starling
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Cormorant	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Murre	<input type="checkbox"/> Myrtle Warbler
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron	<input type="checkbox"/> Thick-billed Murre	<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose	<input type="checkbox"/> Dovekie	<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark
<input type="checkbox"/> Brant	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Guillemot	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard	<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Dove	<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Duck	<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Scaup	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Goldeneye	<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Barrow's Goldeneye	<input type="checkbox"/> Hawk Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel
<input type="checkbox"/> Bufflehead	<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak
<input type="checkbox"/> Oldsquaw	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-eared Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch
<input type="checkbox"/> Harlequin Duck	<input type="checkbox"/> Saw-whet Owl	<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Grosbeak
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Eider	<input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Redpoll
<input type="checkbox"/> King Eider	<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Scoter	<input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch
<input type="checkbox"/> Surf Scoter	<input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> Red Crossbill
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Scoter	<input type="checkbox"/> Blk-backed 3-toed Wdpr.	<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Crossbill
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Merganser	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern 3-toed Wdpr.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rufous-sided Towhee
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Merganser	<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Lark	<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Merganser	<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Jay	<input type="checkbox"/> Slate-coloured Junco
<input type="checkbox"/> Goshawk	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Raven	<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Crow	<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Rough-legged Hawk	<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee	<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle	<input type="checkbox"/> Boreal Chickadee	<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Pigeon Hawk	<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch	<input type="checkbox"/> Lapland Longspur
<input type="checkbox"/> Sparrow Hawk	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Bunting
<input type="checkbox"/> Spruce Grouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper	<u>Species Not Listed</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruffed Grouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	<input type="checkbox"/> Mockingbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Partridge	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Sandpiper	<input type="checkbox"/> Robin	<u>Seen in area in count period</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Glaucous Gull	<input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush	<u>but not on count day.</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Iceland Gull	<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Black-backed Gull	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet
<input type="checkbox"/> Herring Gull	

List all observers on reverse side
 (Please submit details concerning unusual observations)