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N.B. Naturalist

Le Naturaliste du N.-B.





N. B. Federation of Naturalists Fédération des naturalistes du N.-B.

277 avenue Douglas Avenue, Saint John, N.B. Canada E2K 1E5

The Federation is a non-profit organization formed in 1972 to encourage an understanding of nature and the environment, and to focus concern for the natural heritage of New Brunswick.

La Fédération est une organisation sans buts lucratifs formée en 1972 pour encourager une meilleure compréhension de l'environnement naturel, et pour éveiller le souci pour le patrimoine naturel du Nouveau-Brunswick.

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Club l'Envolée Chaleur, 732 Rue Mario, Petit-Rocher, NB E8J 1V6; 783-4336 ; réunions à 19h, 1er lundi, sept. à juin, salle d'activités (au sous-sol) de la Bibliothèque de Beresford.

Club Les Ami(e)s de la Nature du sud-est, a/s Gilles Bourque, 407 Rue High, Moncton NB E1C 6E3; 532-2873 (ligne d'information); réunions alternant entre Dieppe et Shediac, 1er lundi de chaque mois; excursions 3ième samedi ou dimanche; *La plume verte*.

Ford Alward Naturalist Association, c/o Elizabeth McIntosh, 560 Kenneth Road, Glassville, E7L 1B3; 246-5572; meets Florenceville Town Hall, 7:00 pm, 1st Tues., Sept.-June; meetings advertised in local newspapers.

Fredericton Nature Club, Box 772, Stn A, Fredericton, NB E3B 5B4; 455-0569; meets Odell Park Lodge, 7:00 pm, 2nd Wed., Sept.-May; monthly newsletter.

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Moncton Naturalists' Club, Box 28036, Highfield Square P.O., Moncton, NB E1C 9N4; 384-6937 (information line); meets Church of the Nazarene, 21 Fieldcrest Drive, 7 pm, 2nd Wed., Sept.-June; monthly newsletter.

Ornitho Restigouche Club, 6 Van horne Cr., Campbellton, NB E3N 3K3; 789-7759.

Restigouche Naturalists' Club, c/o Campbellton Library, Box 130, Campbellton, NB E3N 3G9; 684-3258; meets Campbellton Centennial Library, 7 pm, 1st Monday

Saint John Naturalists' Club, P.O. Box 2071, Saint John, NB E2L 3J5; meets N.B. Museum at Market Square, 7:30 pm, 2nd Mon., Sept.-May, elsewhere in June; monthly newsletter.

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On peut lire dans *Le Naturaliste du N.-B.* des rapports touchant l'histoire naturelle du Nouveau-Brunswick. Les articles seront acceptés en français ou en anglais pour être reproduits dans la langue d'origine. Les opinions exprimées sont celles de leurs auteurs. **Veuillez faire parvenir tous vos articles pour le Naturaliste du N.-B. à: Irene Doyle, 6 Van Horne Cr., Campbellton, NB E3N 3K3, (506) 753-7261, colector@nbnet.nb.ca**. Demandez les détails de compatibilité d'ordinateur. Tarifs publicitaires disponibles sur demande.

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à Landry proche
de Pokemouche

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Cover: Yellow-breasted Chat, by Julie Paquet

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Sincere thanks to our many volunteers who contributed to this publication.
 Merci beaucoup à tous les bénévoles dévoués qui ont contribué à cette publication.

Please submit articles for the next issue by **February 1, 2000**
 Veuillez soumettre les articles à l'intention du prochain numéro avant le **1 février, 2000**

The Maritime Important Bird Areas Program

Sabine Dietz and Roland Chiasson

In May 1999 we were hired as community conservation planners by the Canadian Nature Federation. The Maritimes program is a cooperative effort with the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island, and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists.

An Important Bird Area (IBA) is a site providing essential habitat for one or more species of breeding or non-breeding birds. These sites may contain threatened species, endemic species, species representative of a biome, or highly exceptional concentrations of birds.

The goal of the IBA Program is to identify and protect a network of sites necessary to ensure the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations for which site-based conservation is appropriate.

Over 160 sites have been nominated as IBA's in the Maritimes so far, and nomination is on-going. A technical committee makes the decision whether a site qualifies or not, and can be designated. There is no legal clout attached to the IBA designation.

Our objective is to develop conservation plans for approximately eight sites in the Maritimes by March 2000. There will very likely be a second year to the program. We will proceed and develop conservation plans in cooperation with interested groups, people, and communities. These conservation plans are a tool to be used to move towards protecting the species and their habitat in the long term. Although the plans will be site specific, larger issues can be taken into consideration as well, if they impact on the site and the species. The sites that are chosen for the conservation planning process are not necessarily the sites that are most crucial to any one species.

The Important Bird Area Program in Canada

The Canadian IBA program was launched in 1996 by the Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada, the Canadian BirdLife partners. Currently, BirdLife has national representation in over 100 countries around the world.

Important Bird Area designation is one tool among many that are available to protect species and their habitat. The designation of a network of sites can help

decision-makers focus their efforts and protect the most critical bird habitat. The program is inclusive and identifies important sites for all groups of birds. It integrates aquatic and terrestrial habitat conservation by protecting seabird, shorebird, landbird, and waterfowl habitat.

If you feel you could contribute to this process, or would like more information about the Maritime important Bird Areas Program, please contact:

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President's Message – Un mot de la Présidente

Pierrette Mercier

YES, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I was recently asked to make up a list of significant conservation achievements that had occurred in the province in the past 100 years. I found that these achievements were few and far apart. Despite hard work from environmental groups like ourselves on issues involving the environment and conservation, there have been more failures than successes. Excuse my pessimism, but I often wondered if we made much of a difference.

Last October, the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Jeannot Volpé, announce interim protection for 8 of the 12 areas proposed in the Lapierre Report. This was a victory for the natural heritage of our province. Thanks to letter writing campaigns and speeches at public hearings, we let our government know the importance of conserving our biodiversity. To my surprise, they actually listened.

However, one battle is won but the war isn't over. These 8 areas have only been temporarily protected pending the outcome of the socio-economic study. We have to keep working to show that preserving these areas intact is more valuable than harvesting them.

There are also other issues that need our support. For example, what will happen to Armstrong Lake, Long Lake, Restigouche River and Upsalquitch River areas mentioned in the Lapierre Report, the Stillwater brook watershed area is in danger of being harvested by Repap, we are progressively losing rights of usage of large chunks of the NB Trail system to snowmobiles and maybe ATVs, marshes are being destroyed all over the province, our National Park system is in trouble and many more.

Yes, we can make a difference by making our voices heard and we must continue to speak out for the causes we believe in because no one else will do it for us.

Oui, nous pouvons faire une différence

Au courant de l'été, j'ai été demandé de dresser une liste des événements importants en conservation qui ont eu lieu au cours du dernier 100 ans dans notre province. J'ai été embêté de répondre car il y en avait peu. Malgré le travail acharné des groupes environnementaux comme le notre, il y a eu plus d'échecs que de succès. Je me suis souvent demandé si nous faisons vraiment une différence.

En octobre, le ministre des ressources naturelles et de l'énergie, Jeannot Volpé, a annoncé la protection provisoire de 8 des 12 zones proposées par le rapport du Dr Lapierre. Ceci était une victoire pour le patrimoine naturel de notre province. Par l'entremise d'une campagne de lettres et par les présentations aux audiences publiques, les groupes écologiques et les individus intéressés ont réussi à convaincre notre gouvernement de l'importance de la biodiversité.

Cependant, le travail n'est pas fini car les 8 zones ne sont que protégées temporairement en attendant l'étude socio-économique. Nous devons continuer à démontrer que ces régions ont plus de valeur intacte que récoltée.

Il y a aussi d'autres causes qui ont besoin de notre aide. Par exemple, qu'est-ce qui va se passer pour les 4 autres zones proposées (le lac Armstrong, le lac Long, la Rivière Restigouche et la rivière Upsalquitch), le bassin hydrographique du ruisseau Stillwater est en danger d'être récolté par la compagnie Repap, nous sommes entrainés de perdre l'accès au Sentier NB contre les motoneiges et plus tard les VTTs, des marais disparaissent partout dans la province, nos Parcs Nationaux ont des graves problèmes et il y en a bien d'autres.

Oui, nous pouvons faire une différence et nous devons continuer car personne d'autre ne le fera pour nous.

The Forest? - Or the Trees?

J.A. (Sandy) Burnett

Editor's Note: The following has been condensed from two in a series of articles by freelance writer and naturalist Sandy Burnett, written in the late 1980s under the sponsorship of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

"Why, he can't see the forest for the trees!"

It's a rare person who doesn't know that old saw. Symbolically, not seeing the forest for the trees means having a narrow outlook - being so tightly focused on details that one never notices the larger realities. In an era of specialization this is an occupational hazard of many professions.

The saying is sometimes literally true as well. It could be claimed with some justification that fortunes have been made in Canada for over a century by the simple expedient of cutting millions of trees without ever noticing that there was a forest.

To make this observation is to suggest an understanding of trees and forests that differs fundamentally from the attitude which has guided most economic developers since the industrial revolution. Instead of assuming that trees, or waters, or wildlife are separate, independent "resources", each to be exploited without regard for whatever impact it may have on the others, the new viewpoint proposes that all are parts of an integrated environmental system. Within that framework whatever happens to one part will inevitably influence the rest.

When persistent toxic chemicals are released into the environment, they will eventually turn up in the tissues of wildlife, or in the drinking water of towns and cities. When watersheds are denuded of timber, it will not take long for soil erosion to clog lakes and streams with silt, or to blanket with mud the spawning beds of trout and salmon. In a time when new environmental horror stories are reported almost daily in the media, these truths may seem self-evident; yet, it is only in the last few years that they have begun to gain widespread public understanding and acceptance.

Some years ago, a friend of mine, a forester with a major pulp and paper company, ran afoul of his boss. He had been asked to prepare a plan that would enable the company to cut every living tree from a given area in the next ten years and then move on. He responded with a proposal to harvest the identical plot of land

profitably on a twenty year cycle, in perpetuity. He was fired for his pains.

Today, he might win a bonus for his idea. Historically, Canadian forests have often been over-exploited solely to extract maximum profit. Now many natural resource managers in government and in industry acknowledge that the result is an unhealthy, unbalanced forest which may not suffice to meet the economic and environmental needs that depend on it. The key to their thinking is the realization that the forest is much more than the sum of its trees; it is an integrated ecosystem, a community that includes soil, water, climate, and the entire complex web of plants and animals that live within it.

No longer is it enough to think of a forest as a convenient source of wood and wood fibre. Tourism and the recreational and commercial uses of wildlife now vie with forestry as major contributors of jobs and dollars to the Canadian economy. From a purely economic point of view, these interests are bound to have a growing influence on forest management policies. Neither tourists nor wildlife would want to be caught dead in a wasteland where forests have been reduced to mile after mile of clear-cut desolation.

There is a pressing need to develop effective ways of evaluating and managing the use of forests so that all their components, not just the trees or the game species, but all the plants and animals, the soil and the water can be maintained in a healthy balance. A wide variety of people - loggers and scientists, trappers and tourist outfitters, and a host of others - have a stake in preserving diverse and healthy forests, but the need goes beyond their economic or professional interests, beyond the trees, and even beyond the forests. Ultimately, it has to do with the preservation and health of the global ecosystem that we call the earth.

The idea of a forest as an integrated natural community or ecosystem is very attractive in this era of growing environmental awareness. But realistically speaking, a huge gap lies between the theory, and the practical management of resources for sustained, multiple-use purposes.

Recently, a series of field studies has begun which may help to bridge that gap. For some years, foresters have used mathematical models to predict how much wood or wood fibre can be harvested from a given



area in a given time. The technique is called wood supply analysis. Now, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources, with the financial support of Wildlife Habitat Canada, have begun gathering data which, it is hoped, will enable them to make similar predictions with regard to forest wildlife populations - a process called habitat supply analysis. The initiative puts Atlantic Canadians on the leading edge of forest research.

New Brunswick is an ideal place for this type of work to begin. About 85% of the province is covered with forest, more than half of which is on Crown land, and the Crown Lands and Forests Act of New Brunswick specifically directs that the forests of the province be managed for ecological diversity. On the other hand, large tracts of that forest are in poor condition following generations of exploitive harvesting, extensive and recurrent forest fires, and more than three decades of chronic budworm infestation. Too many stands of trees are either overmature or immature; too few fall in the middle range to meet even the pragmatic, economic objectives of the forest industry, let alone the more complex goals of multiple-use management.

In fact, New Brunswick is not alone in this dilemma. Similar problems afflict the forests of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and it is to their credit that these provinces, as well, are initiating policies which will encourage integrated, rather than piecemeal, forest resource analysis.

In New Brunswick, the research undertaking has started with the premise that in order to restore and manage a forest on a sustainable basis, one must first prepare an inventory of the elements that it contains. Only then can one move on to explore the interrelationships that make it a dynamic ecological community. Which plants provide essential food for

which insects, and which insects are crucial for the pollination of plants? Which bird species are best able to control those insect populations at a healthy level? Which wildflowers, by their presence or absence, can serve as early indicators of changes in water table or soil chemistry? Which lichens, in the same manner, may signal the presence of different types of air pollution?

But first, the inventory - the baseline data from which all these more complex connections will be derived and woven into a coherent pattern - must be established. Two types of information which are already at hand are soil classifications and forest types. Now, the federal and provincial wildlife agencies have begun to develop population abundance estimates for some 157 different species of vertebrates that depend for their survival on the presence of healthy forest habitats.

With many species to consider in many settings, the work will take several years. Priority has been assigned to the study of some species over others, according to a series of diagnostic standards. Is a creature used consumptively, as a game animal or furbearer? Do forestry operations influence it positively or negatively? Is it a major prey species for other wildlife? Is it threatened or endangered? Is it potentially an indicator of particular forest types or conditions? In this way, a hierarchy has been developed, with the White-tailed Deer heading the list and an inconspicuous amphibian called Tremblay's Salamander in last place.

During June and July, 1988, Canadian Wildlife Service researchers began a census of migratory forest birds in selected sites in northern and central New Brunswick. In the latter part of the summer, the focus turned to gathering information on the vegetation of each census plot, and to correlating data on birds and plants. Meanwhile, provincial researchers have begun similar assessments of game and fur-bearing mammals, eventually aiming to assess the status of snakes, frogs and salamanders as well.

By gathering population data on each species, within each major forest type, benchmarks can be established against which to measure ecological responses to events like logging, spraying, fire, or to more gradual trends, such as aging or acidification. Eventually, the goal is to gain enough familiarity with how the forest ecosystem reacts, that it will be possible to make key management decisions based on knowledge, rather than informed guesswork.

The Drive and the Bird

Mike Lushington

The totally unexpected appearance of the Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) in Matapédia, Quebec this past late November caused a great deal of excitement in our part of northern New Brunswick, as well as in the host village itself. This spectacular bird drew viewers from all over the northeastern corner of the continent: birders anxious to add another "lifer" to their lists and others, simply curious as to what the fuss was all about.

The appearance of the bird and the attention it drew has given me ample ammunition for an idea that I have been promoting to local tourism people for the past few years: birds, and birders, can mean big money to a local economy. Of all of those people (upwards of four hundred, I believe, by now) who travelled to Matapédia to see the oriole, how many bought gasoline, ate meals and even spent overnights in local establishments?

But even as I promote such ideas, I am bothered by what amounts to a personal conflict.

I am a birder. I take pride in what I do, I spend as much quality time as I can in the field and I am working hard to become as knowledgeable as I can about the birds in my area, both through firsthand observation and by reading and studying.

But, even more fundamentally, I am an environmentalist, and have been, consciously and deliberately, for a much longer time than I have been a birder. And one of the most basic tenets of my environmentalism has been the promotion of the wise, and conservative, usage of our depleting natural resources. How do I reconcile that philosophy with the attempts to motivate people to drive hundreds, even thousands, of kilometers for what usually amounts to a fifteen or twenty minute visit with a bird?

To a large degree, I have settled that question for myself: I really don't travel any great distance to find rarities and an increasing amount of my field work at home is, and will be done on foot, by kayak or on my bicycle. Of course, since I have retired from teaching, I have the time to do this: my field trips are, as often as not, spontaneous and they are not crammed into a single, see-as-much-as-I-can outing on the weekends.

However that begs the larger question: how do I reconcile my two, often opposing goals, that of trying to promote active tourism in an area which desperately needs something to stimulate a moribund economy with that of conservation? Am I simply talking out of both corners of my mouth?

Increasingly I have come to think so. I really do not think that I can promote the indiscriminate waste of gasoline for the simple satisfaction of ticking off another species on my life list, be it in Matapédia, at Mary's Point or anywhere else. The fact that I was one of the first local birders to drive up to see the oriole reflects this conflict in my own mind: I did it, I was glad that I had (it is a beautiful, if sadly misdirected creature), and yet I have remained disturbed by what the environmentalist in me has to describe as a rather frivolous use of a non-renewable natural resource.

I know that I am not prepared to argue that no one should ever travel anywhere to see birds. In any case I have a hard time dealing with absolutes, especially those which smack of moral righteousness. I know that birders, by definition are conscious and concerned environmentalists if only for the fundamental realization that without a healthy environment we will not have very many birds to admire. On the other hand I think that we have got to see that wasting gasoline to see birds is, in the overall scheme of things, no better than wasting it for a frivolous jaunt to the local mall or a Sunday afternoon drive to nowhere.

As a form of appeasement to my own split conscience, I am trying to promote planning and carpooling. If I want to drive down to the bar to check out the geese, I will also make a run to the post office and stop off at the hardware store for those nails I need. If I want to take a trek to Sackville to visit the Waterfowl Park, I will take a carload with me. At least, in so doing, I feel, rightly or wrongly, that I am trying to incorporate some balance between these two very important aspects of my own life. Perhaps, in so doing, I can reduce that nagging feeling of hypocrisy within myself whenever I feel the urge to rail at some resource mismanagement just after I have been driving around the countryside in search of... whatever.

Rare Sightings

Allan Madden

Editor's Note: more of Allan Madden's Rare Sightings, as well as introductory commentary by the author, can be found in the Summer 1999 issue of the NB Naturalist.

I watched from our rear lawn in the late 70s, an otter diving through a melt hole in the ice on the Restigouche River estuary. It caught six eels in only five consecutive dives. Yes, in one dive it exited with two eels! Whether its success rate was due to the eels still being buried in the bottom mud I do not know. It took the otter no longer than approximately two minutes to consume each eel.

More than a decade passed before I again chanced upon a similar situation. This time I was able to stalk within 13m of two adult otters and photograph them with a telephoto lens. The scene was made even more dramatic by the clearly audible crunching of bone and flesh of the eels and suckers being consumed.

In mid-October, 1980, I paddled around a bend in the river only a few hundred metres downstream from the location of the other sightings. Directly in front of me and only 20m away were three otters, one of which was on shore and the other two in shallow water. The highlight was not the fact that here were three otters at close range, but that the two animals in the water were staring at me, each with an eel of approx. 60cm (2ft) in length, writhing about its neck and head. The eels obviously had just been caught.

My first mink sighting was that of a partly albino (75% white) animal that approached to within 3m of me as I fished for trout near the Gorge Road on the West Branch of Halls Creek in 1955. I've never seen another mink with albinism among the dozens I've since viewed.

The second groundhog I saw was a totally melanistic (black) adult on the Cocagne River in May, 1957. I've not seen nor heard of such a rarity since. While crouched tending a rabbit snare in dense cover on the Moncton Pipeline, October, ca. 1960, I suddenly noted a skunk lying 1m to my left. I froze, saw that the skunk was not dead, but breathing slowly and wondered how I would escape without inhaling its wretched odor if it sprayed. Amazingly, I was able to rise and escaped unscathed, for it never awakened.

Seeing a weasel 10m away on our driveway in summer, I called it by imitating a mouse cry, done by sucking on the back of one's hand. It responded by running to me and stood on its hind legs on top of one of my feet. I didn't move and hoped it wouldn't run up the inside of my pant leg. I've seen a mouse do that to a stranger!

Two very large bull moose were found freshly deceased and antlers locked, in the South Charlo River area, about October 20, 1978. One bull had 24 points and the other 26, unusual in northeastern N.B.; and each weighed approx. 400kg + if field dressed. Other than the find, what was most unusual was the fact that a circle of only approx. 4m in radius was scuffed i.e., evidence of their struggle. Could it be that these animals were so evenly matched that neither one could budge the other to any extent? Art Dixon of C'ton made the initial find and showed it to me.

The first time I ever listened to beavers was at a beaver lodge on Jonathan Creek about 3km upstream from the center of Centennial Park, Moncton, ca. 1956. Every lodge has a "chimney" at its peak, and by listening there we could easily hear what sounded like three or four men playing poker. Every naturalist should try this.

Having spotted sleeping mammals in the forest before they saw me is something I came across only twice. One, such animal was a fox 4m away in 40cm tall grass growing within a softwood/hardwood stand near Notre Dame in October 1962. It took the fox only about ten seconds to smell me. It raised its snout, and sniffed the air and approximately five seconds later, stood up and walked away. It never saw me.



La nichée d'Arthur-William

Arthur-William Landry

La nichée d'Arthur-William

Le Harfang des neiges: *Nyctea scandia* (Linnaeus)

Etendue des ailes déployées: 1,5 m

Longueur: de 55,5 à 69 cm

Chant: sifflement aigu et tremblotant (silencieux au sud de son aire de nidification).

Cri: cris et sifflements visant à éloigner les intrus

Vol: très silencieux.

Le Harfang des neiges vient nous visiter à peu près tous les quatre ou cinq ans. Contrairement à la plupart des oiseaux migrateurs, il nous vient du nord et non du sud.

Dans son habitat ordinaire, il se nourrit surtout de lemmings. C'est lorsque la population de ces petits rongeurs est à son niveau le plus bas que ce beau rapace vient nous rendre visite. En effet, la quantité de lemmings bruns et de lemmings variables peut fluctuer grandement selon un cycle qui varie généralement entre deux et cinq ans. Certains autre ont même cru que ces petits mammifères se suicident périodiquement. Un article intitulé *Mystery March* publié dans le *Whig Standard* de Kingston, vers 1950, déclare, «But the lemmings are the only creatures which indulge in mass suicide at regular intervals and on an organized basis.» Il va sans dire que si tel était le cas, notre hibou s'opposerait catégoriquement à une telle coutume.

Le mâle est pour ainsi dire d'un blanc immaculé tandis que sa femelle est plus grande et plus massive que lui. Et plus sombre aussi, le bout de ses plumes étant marqué de points brun foncé.

Ces oiseaux sont tellement bien protégés par leur épais plumage que la température de leur corps se maintient entre 38 et 40° C.

Leurs yeux sont si bien développés qu'ils n'ont aucunement besoin de jumelles pour repérer de très loin de minuscules rongeurs en mouvement. En outre, ils ont inventé l'antenne parabolique quelques milliards d'années avant les hommes. Les disques de plumes qui entourent leurs yeux captent les ondes sonores pour les transmettre à leurs oreilles. C'est ainsi que le Harfang des neiges se guide sur le moindre bruit que fait sa proie pour la capturer par les nuits les plus sombres.

On ne sera pas surpris de voir ces prédateurs chasser même en plein jour si on se rappelle qu'ils



naissent se loin au nord qu'ils bénéficient là-bas des journées de l'Arctique, qui leur donnent presque six mois de lumière ininterrompue durant la période estivale.

Cette année, un Harfang des neiges est venu se percher le 12 novembre, sur la cheminée d'une maison voisine de la mienne. Il est resté là, immobile pendant environ quatre heures à partir de midi. Comme les cheminées qui ne fument pas dégagent quand même une douce chaleur, dérobée il va sans dire à l'intérieur de la maison, j'ai conclu que notre visiteur s'est cru en Floride et a fait un long somme afin de refaire ses forces après un interminable voyage.

Ou peut-être observait-il attentivement pour la première fois une région habitée par l'*Homo sapiens*. S'il avait été journaliste pour *Le boréal* ou *Le soliel de minuit*, il aurait sans doute voulu décrire le hameau vu des airs, comme Saint-Exupéry, des hublots de son avion. Probablement aurait-il voulu émettre quelques opinions quant à l'aménagement de l'endroit. Puis, il aurait certainement brossé un tableau des spectateurs qui sont venus se grouper autour de lui pour l'admirer. Les enfants lui lançaient tout ce qui leur tombait sous la main. Heureusement que les projectiles menaçaient plus les fenêtres que ses plumes. Plusieurs adultes, un genou sur le sol et un oeil fermé, le visaient en plein dans la nuque en pointant vers lui de leurs deux mains une arme imaginaire. Un chasseur se préparait à aller chercher sa carabine lorsque quelqu'un lui rappela que la loi défend d'abattre l'un de ces rares migrateurs. Le titre du reportage aurait bien pu citer les paroles mêmes du plus loquace de ces badauds: «R'garde! r'garde! un arpent des neiges!»

Les hiboux sont réputés être de grands sages. Ils savent bien que si Voltaire a pu se tromper quant à la valeur économique de notre pays, un simple paysan a tout à fait le droit d'errer un peu en essayant de les nommer.

Le Ven'd'est, mars 1987

Sackville's Waterfowl Park

Paul Bogaard

"Discover a wetland world beneath your feet! Watch a muskrat part mirror-smooth water in a V-shaped ripple. Focus your camera on the antics of fuzzy ducklings dabbling in the shallows. Listen to a sunset chorus of marsh birds, the eerie cries of rail, coot, grebe, and bittern. From dawn to dusk, the entertainment never stops at the Sackville Waterfowl park, and the show is all for you."

The Tourism Office in Sackville hopes this kind of lead from their current brochure will lure even more 'eco-tourists' off the Trans-Canada. Easily visible to drivers hustling by, 55 acres of wetland reaches from the Highway to within yards of the centre of Town. It's enough to draw nearly 25,000 visitors a year, and has spawned an annual Waterfowl Celebration.

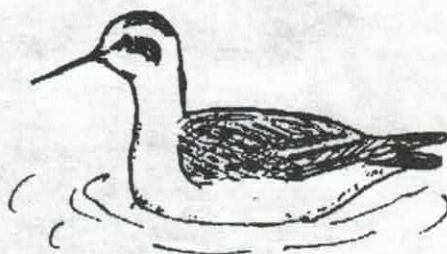
It was just over ten years ago, when a consultant's report recommended that Sackville take advantage of its location and long tradition of waterfowl and shorebird migration. Unsure how to capitalize on this idea, the Town welcomed the proposal drafted by three long-time members of the local Chignecto Naturalists' Club--Al Smith, Sandy Burnett, and myself. Actually, there was more than a little scepticism and amusement at the whole idea, but we were able not only to sketch what could be done, but demonstrate the willingness of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Mount Allison University and Ducks Unlimited to join with the Town in this joint project. The practicality of it carried the day much more so than the dream of ducks.

But ducks there were. No sooner had the top log been slotted into the water-control structure in 1988 than a wetland filled and sprang to life! . . . more cattails, more muskrats, and more ducks per square metre of water than anyone had seen or expected. Perhaps folks who live next to the vast Tantramar marshes should have known better. Instead of the predicted pollution from residential runoff, the water has proven to be so nutrient rich that it now supports the highest density of breeding waterfowl anywhere around. Within its first few years the Sackville Waterfowl Part won Environment Canada's National Award for Environmental Achievement, and it quickly become known as one of those special places where serious birders could see wonderful things.

What has surprised us most is the readiness with which the Park has been taken to heart by our local community. It isn't just nearby the centre of Town, it has become the centre of our community. Everyone walks the nearly three kilometres of trails and board walks. It's where everyone brings their friends and visitors. It has introduced so many to the natural heritage they had never quite realized was all around us.

When in 1992 Chris Ellingwood helped put together a comprehensive checklist it included 160 species of birds. Today we know of over twenty additional species that have been reported in the Park, and several more than the 26 species Chris confirmed were breeding there. There's an informative public display in the CWS Office which now borders the Park, and support from the NB Department of Economic Development and Tourism and from the Environmental Trust has made several additions and repairs possible. If you've seen Stu Tingley & Wayne Barrett's *Wings over Water*, you may have already seen our Waterfowl Park. It's dedicated to the Park where many of their photographs were taken.

Yet, nothing can quite compare to experiencing such a wetland yourself and in such an intimate way. What could be more startling than the technicolor chicks of our resident coots almost within reach, more unexpected than a Sora rail trailing her brood right out in front of you, or more filled with urgency than the peeping of baby grebes for their Pied-billed mother just off to one side. Given their lack of concern about us, confined to the board walks, it's as if we have disappeared. Come to The Sackville Waterfowl Park and disappear with us!



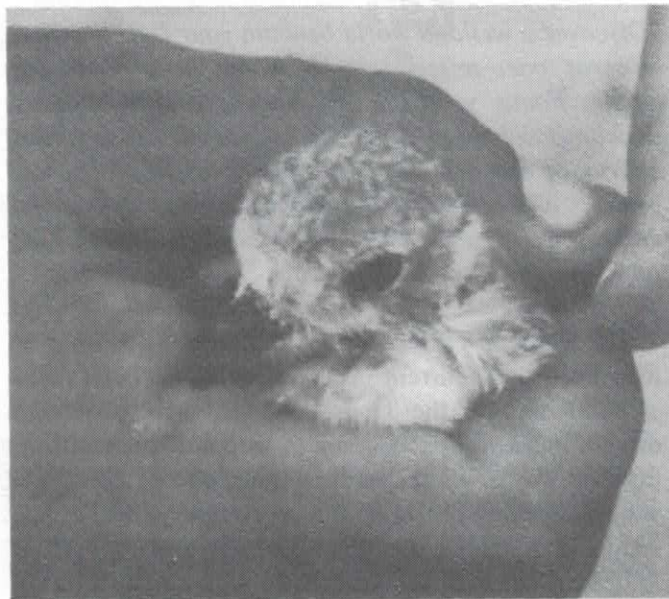
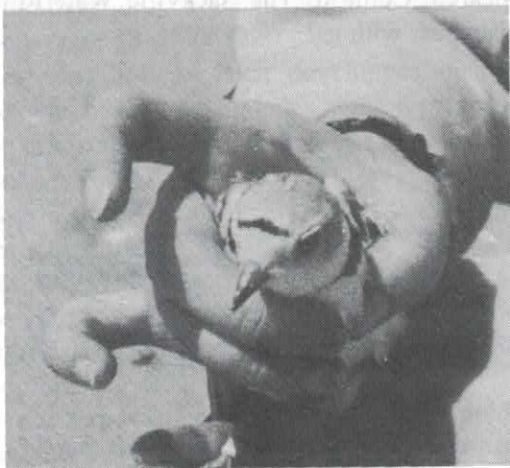
Eastern Canada Piping Plover Banding Project Initiated

Diane L. Amirault

After preliminary efforts to determine the feasibility of banding Piping Plovers proved successful, an intensive effort was initiated in Eastern Canada during the summer of 1999. A detailed protocol for the banding, focusing on the need for marking birds with a minimum of disturbance, was developed in conjunction with the Piping Plover Recovery Team and Working Group. The overall objectives of the banding research include:

- determine whether juvenile birds are being recruited into the population;
- determine metapopulation dynamics/links with other populations;
- determine survival rates of adults and juveniles;
- identify dispersal and movement patterns;
- Answer general questions on the biology/behaviour.

The banding scheme was very straightforward. A single metal band was placed on the lower right leg of adults and a single colour band was placed on the lower left leg. The opposite banding scheme was applied to juveniles - a single metal band was placed on the lower left leg while a single colour band was placed on the lower right leg. Specific colour bands were assigned to each province as follows: Nova Scotia - light green/yellow; New Brunswick - light blue/white; Prince Edward Island - red/dark green; Quebec (Magdalen Islands) - grey. The colour assignment for Newfoundland was pink/dark blue, however no birds were banded in Newfoundland this year.



A total of 105 Piping Plovers were marked, including 24 adults and 81 juveniles (38 in Nova Scotia, 42 in New Brunswick, 25 in Prince Edward Island). Seven of 21 birds banded during 1998 were also re-sighted this year. Two of these birds were re-trapped in the same location as where they were banded last year. The effort will be continued over the next four years.

In order to assist researchers in the study, naturalists or other interested people seeing any banded Piping Plovers should report their sightings to the Canadian Wildlife Service (call collect) or local Department of Natural Resources office. Please provide as much detail on the sighting as possible including date, location, band colour and position (i.e. right or left leg).

For more information contact:

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BOTANY QUIZ

Gart Bishop, Kennebecasis Naturalist's Society

What is it? See if you can guess the identity of the following native wildflower. The answer will appear in the next issue of the N.B. Naturalist/Le Naturaliste du N.-B.

You will find this plant growing along the mucky shores of quiet, shallow ponds and in the back-eddys of rivers. Its flowering stalk (up to 1 m) rises above the basal cluster of smooth, glossy, long stemmed leaves, each having a round or heart-shaped base, and a blade with 7-9 noticeable veins. Occasionally it can be found thriving totally submerged.

The minute three-petaled flowers (4 mm-1/4") grow in a pretty, spreading panicle (cluster) of whorled branches with North American plants typically having white petals, while the European/African varieties have pinkish or reddish petals. These inconspicuous flowers are insect pollinated, with Syrphid flies likely being the major pollinators. The flowers ripen into little disks of thin scale-like fruits.

In form and leaf shape the plant has been thought to remotely resemble Common Plantain (*Plantago major*), though in flower, and habitat the plants are not at all similar. It is much more closely related to another wetland species, the arrowhead (*Sagittaria* sp.), with which it shares a similar flower structure.

The root is a perennial bulb-like fleshy corm. While some sources (Fernald) state that these corms may be used as a starchy vegetable of a mealy texture, others (Richardson) advise that even after intensive drying and boiling, one should not consume this plant, which is not considered a major food source for any known wildlife. Care should also be taken when handling its leaves as they are known to irritate and redden the skin.

From a more positive perspective, modern medical research has verified certain therapeutic properties of the root including its use for the treatment of kidney ailments. Recent findings also suggest that extracts from this plant may lower our blood pressure and glucose levels as well as inhibit fat storage in the liver. Historically it was used to treat the bites of rabid dogs, giving rise to such names as 'Mad-dog weed' and 'Devils' Spoons'. An unsubstantiated account by John Josselyn in 1674 stated: "You must lay them [the leaves] whole to the leggs to draw out water between the skin and the flesh." Such use gave rise to names

such as "Water Suck-leaves", and "Scurvie-leaves". Not a particularly pleasant picture, and I am at a loss as to what disease such a treatment would combat.

This plant is most commonly found in the St. John River area, but can be found in small populations throughout the province, even as far north as Campbellton. It is found in all Canadian provinces and as far south as California and Florida. However you choose to call this plant, it is an interesting find when exploring your favorite wetland area.

The wildflower described in the Botany Quiz from the last issue [Vol 26 (2)] was Purple Avens also known as Water Avens, Chocolate-Root, Benoîte des ruisseaux (*Geum rivale*).



Illustration: Benjamin Lander

The following books were consulted in compiling the above description.

- Coffey, T. 1993. *The History and Folklore of North American Wildflowers*. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston.
- Creevey, C.A. 1897. *Flowers of Field, Hill, and Swamp*. Harper and Brothers Publishers New York.
- Eastman, J. 1995. *The Book of Swamp and bog*. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA.
- Fernald, M.L. & A.C. Kinsey. 1943. *Edible Wild Plants of Eastern North America*. Idlewild Press, Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y.
- Hinds, H. R. 1986. *The Flora of New Brunswick*. Primrose Press, Fredericton NB.
- Magee, D.W. 1981. *Freshwater Wetlands*. The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Richardson, J. 1981. *Wild Edible Plants of New England*. The Globe Pequot Press, Chester CT.

AMERICAN CROWS: SENTINELS OF DISEASE

James P. Goltz

A good friend often teases me by stating that the American Crow should be the provincial bird of New Brunswick. When asked why, he replies that they are the most conspicuous and distinctive bird species in the province, by virtue of their vocalizations and their abundance, especially along highways where they serve as a clean up crew for road-killed animals of all sizes from insects through mammals.

Many New Brunswickers don't share my friend's opinions about crows. Unfortunately, these intelligent and highly successful birds are often considered to be 'nuisance' wildlife, particularly when huge numbers flock together to roost, raid fields of grain or perform a raucous symphony. However, thanks to the American Crow, we have been alerted to the presence of a new virus in North America.

In mid August, some wild crows were found dead on the grounds of the Bronx Zoo in New York city, but phone reports of dead crows elsewhere in the city had begun earlier in the summer. Around the same time, there were reports of encephalitis, originally thought to be St. Louis encephalitis, in humans. By late August, crow deaths were reported in multiple areas in New York state. Deaths in captive birds began in the Bronx Zoo in early September and continued over a three-week period. Horse deaths, initially attributed to a parasitic infection transmitted by opossums, began in New York state in late August. **West Nile Virus** has been isolated from crows, other wild birds, zoo birds, humans, horses and mosquitoes, and is believed to be the cause of these disease problems and mortality.



What is West Nile Virus and why is it cause for concern?

It is a virus that may cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and is spread only by the bites of infected arthropods, mainly infecting humans, domestic fowl, large domestic animals, and non-human primates.

In humans, West Nile Virus may cause mild disease with fever, frontal headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes and skin rash, and less commonly may result in severe disease that is marked by headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, occasional convulsions, paralysis and death.

Disease is usually more severe in the elderly. The incubation period (between infection and the onset of disease) in humans is usually 5 to 15 days.

No approved vaccines against this virus are available for use in humans or animals.

Prior to the 1999, the virus was only reported from Africa, Asia and Europe, and had never been found in the Western Hemisphere.

The 1999 New York area outbreak of West Nile Virus caused disease in at least 60 people and resulted in 7 human deaths, including one Canadian who visited New York from Toronto. It likely killed at least 5000 wild birds, mainly American Crows, but also caused deaths in at least 17 other species of native wild (Blue Jay, Fish Crow, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Rock Dove, American Robin, Red-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Belted Kingfisher) and captive (Bald Eagle, Laughing Gull, Sandhill Crane, Black-crowned Night Heron, Mallard) birds, as well as Chilean Flamingos and unspecified species of pheasants and cormorants. The virus caused disease in at least 22 horses (at least 10 of which died or had to be euthanized), while at least 21 other horses became infected without showing any sign of disease. Although most cases of disease and death in humans and animals occurred in New York state, some bird mortality was also detected in nearby New Jersey and Connecticut.

Health officials responded to the West Nile Virus outbreak with public education campaigns,

surveillance of mosquitoes and dead birds, and mosquito control programs. It is not known how the virus arrived in the New York area but it is hypothesized that it may have been introduced by migrating birds, legal or illegal imports of birds, a viremic person, or the transport of infected mosquitoes via aircraft. Consequently, several countries have adopted measures to prevent importation of the virus from New York.

Canadian public health officials fear that West Nile Virus may be brought to eastern Canada next spring by migrating birds infected with the virus. As in mammals, not all infected birds will become sick or die. No one really knows what will happen next year, but wildlife agencies and entomologists in the southern United States have been organized to help with surveillance of wild birds and mosquitoes this winter, and similar efforts for eastern Canada will likely be carried out in the spring and summer.

What can we naturalists do to safeguard against and prepare for West Nile Virus? It is important to be well informed, and to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes by adopting personal protective measures when engaging in outdoor activities where mosquitoes are likely to be encountered, especially at dawn, at dusk and at night (and especially if travelling to areas where the virus is known to occur).

In addition, please keep watch for any warning signs that our American Crow population may provide. Remember, if not for the American Crow, West Nile Virus may not have been detected and identified as soon as it was. Unusual outbreaks of crow mortality should be reported to Dr. Jim Goltz at the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory [(506) 453-5412] or Dr. Pierre-Yves Daoust at the Atlantic Veterinary College [(902) 566-0667], especially if neurologic disease is suspected. Suspect dead birds should be placed in leakproof plastic bags and promptly refrigerated until they can be delivered to a laboratory for testing. Remember, there's no need to worry about catching the West Nile Virus directly from wild birds; however, avoiding handling any sick or dead animal with your bare hands will help prevent the handler from exposure to other possible diseases.

The following internet links are provided for those who would like additional information on West Nile Virus:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol5no5/hubalek.htm#20>
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arbor/arboinfo.htm>
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r990924.htm>
<http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/nwhchome.html>

NBFN DIRECTORS' MEETING, NOVEMBER 13, 1999

Bonnie Hamilton Bogart

PRESENT:

Pierrette Mercier (President), Rose-Alma Mallet (Past-President), Bonnie Hamilton Bogart (Secretary), Gart Bishop (Kennebecasis), Jean Wilson (Saint John), Vivian Beale (Moncton), Kevin O'Donnell (Member at-large), Kevin Tutt (Fredericton), Janet Erskine (Chignecto)

1. Agenda

Moved by Rose Alma Mallet that the agenda be approved as circulated. Carried.

2. Minutes of the September 18th Meeting

Approved as read.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

Protected Spaces - Rose-Alma Mallet: Activity on this issue is on hold until further information is received.

Director-at-large: Inuk Simard has accepted the post of Member-at-large.

National CNF Conference: The Canadian Nature Federation is planning a national web page in partnership with provinces. Discussion flowing from this agenda item revolved around the need to be more proactive in preserving the goal of "free, open public use of provincial parks". The question then arose regarding how to address the many issues that face the federation from year to year.

Moved by Bonnie Bogart and seconded by Vivian Beale that: a prioritization of provincial issues be conducted with input from all federated clubs. Each club to submit their three top priority issues to be addressed by the NBFN. Carried. Submissions to be sent to Pierrette Mercier.

It was also agreed to ask member clubs to submit names of speakers and their topics, videos, and all the appropriate contact information for circulation.

4. Correspondence - None

5. Treasurer's Report - submitted by Jim Brown: Balance is \$3,105.51.

6. Membership Secretary's Report - Jean Wilson: There were 237 paid members for 1999, and 100 unpaid 'members'.

Jim Brown will be asked to send a notice to each club for the annual payment of dues. Members of the Board of Directors will be asked to contact the unpaid members in their area.

A reminder regarding dues will be sent out in the next newsletter. If an unpaid member wishes to receive the summer '99 edition of the NB Naturalist, they will

receive it upon receipt of their membership renewal, and both the summer edition and the fall edition will be sent out together.

7. Reports from Federated Clubs

Club les Ami(e)s de la nature du sud-est: Gilles Bourque: November meeting: plan to invite three senior presenters to speak on the cardinal, fall plants and astronomy. November 21st: holding an Open House in celebration of their 10th anniversary.

Saint John Naturalists' Club: Jean Wilson Holding a series of "learning meetings" on a variety of topics - e.g., mushrooms, nests, plants, birds. Next meeting: a viewing of "Seasons of the Eider", a video featuring Point Lepreau early in the film.

Continued next page

That Elusive Northern N.B. Amethyst!

Mike Lavoie

If you want to find amethyst from northern New Brunswick it is there! But to find it is quite a challenge these days!

What I am talking about is a type of quartz that is a semi-precious stone which is formed in volcanic rock in veins and pockets.

It is the birthstone for February and it is very popular with collectors all over the world.

In Nova Scotia it is somewhat easier to locate around the Bay of Fundy area, but New Brunswick also has some bragging rocks. My wife, Doris, and I have been searching the local beaches for over a dozen years or so, picking up odd things here and there while enjoying our walks together in the fresh sea air. We would pick up the odd shell and a nice piece of driftwood, but mostly we are just enjoying the great view, looking at the mountains across the Bay of Chaleur.

This mountain range is part of the Notre Dame mountains which in turn make up part of the Appalachian range.

This place is also noted for agates and jaspers and sometimes the odd pieces of jasperized wood and amethyst are found here.

Looking down and into the sands, sometimes even hearing a seagull or raven, we enjoy the get-away-from-it-all feeling here. It is pleasing to see the waves come in and the birds soaring around and once in a while we even see a heron along these rustic shores.

Over the years we have managed to find a few good agates to polish in our rock tumbler. We own a 12 lb. tumbler, factory built from the United States. Some of these polished area agates are worthy enough to be set in jewellery which I also do as a hobby. Sometimes we are seen at the local farmers markets with a "rock" table so if you happen to see us do take a look at our locally made jewellery. A piece of locally made agate jewellery from this area is getting rarer to find, so if you purchase a piece from us hang on to it; its value will increase as the years fly by.

As I ramble on here about collecting in this area I'd say the chances of finding amethyst is getting infrequent but.... once in a while the melting snows from winters gone by do wash out good areas. These elusive purple crystals called amethyst are getting rarer all over the world because of mineral collectors scooping them up. The enjoyment of seeing and doing something with these colorful 'rocks' may be not as frequent, but if you ever walk the beaches in our region keep a lookout for these semi-precious stones. Kids love them! Also check out the local birds and see how many of the numerous species you can find around these rocky shorelines.

Oh yes, do respect private property and don't dig up someone's yard looking - ok!

Happy Hunting!

Chignecto Naturalists' Club: Janet Erskine: Botanist from Mount Allison conducted several field trips for members. Jeff Allerlead delivered a presentation on the salt marshes of Fundy.

Moncton Naturalists' Club: Vivian Beale: Meetings are planned into the new year. Promoting meetings through public announcements in the media - good success with over 20 in attendance at last meeting. Also have introduced the idea of 'greeters' to greet new people. The Cape Enrage building is being renovated and winterized for watching migrations.

Club d'ornithologie du Madawaska: Pierrette Mercier
The club is involved with 5 projects:

- 1) an inventory database (EPOM) for marshes on the St. John River, and a study of their birds, plants and animals
- 2) methods for keeping birds of prey away from aquaculture ponds to prevent owners from shooting them

- 3) students are involved in constructing a new marsh
- 4) abandoned duck boxes are being fixed up by students

- 5) the public is being educated about not feeding ducks on the river

The club has three new life members. The club recently purchased a scope, binoculars and a tripod for use by members. A field trip is planned to the lakes in upper Madawaska.

8. Newsletter Coordinator's Report - Ken MacIntosh is working on the fall issue and Gert Bishop is working on the winter issue.

9. Projects

10. Important Bird Areas - Roland Chiasson Deferred.

11. Insurance - Kevin O'Donnell: Kevin has several queries out to companies and brokers. We may need to distinguish between work projects and functions.

12. Charitable Status - Kevin Tutt and Jim Brown: Work is in progress.

NEW BRUNSWICK FEDERATION OF NATURALISTS

HELP BUILD A STRONGER VOICE FOR NATURE

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership fee for the current year is \$15 annually in Canada and \$20 in other countries. Fees should be directed to the membership secretary, Jean E. Wilson, 2 Neck Road, Quispamsis, N.B., E2G-1L3

.....Renewal

.....New Member

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postal Code.....

Telephone.....e-mail.....

Federated Club.....

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Recipient Name.....

Address.....

.....Postal Code.....

Donor Name.....

Address.....

.....Postal Code.....

A note will be sent announcing your gift and welcoming the new member to the Federation.

Thank you for your support!

13. Other Business

1) Pierrette noted that it is planned to harvest Peregrine Falcons in the USA, and that many of these birds would have migrated from Canada, and NB in particular. Vivian Beale said that Mary Majka had done a presentation on this topic, and had given an e-mail address where letters could be sent. Pierrette will get the address and send an e-mail expressing our concern.

2) NB Trails has given a lease to the Snomobile Federation for 1,000 Km of trails on crown land this year, between November 15th and April 15th. The Snowmobile Federation would have exclusive use of the trails for the five months. The Snowmobilers

Federation and the ATV Federation have signed an agreement which encourages the ATVers to stay off NB Trails at all times of the year. ATVs are also prohibited in protected areas. The issue of the exclusive use of trails by snowmobilers was not well publicized. Kevin agreed to prepare a letter regarding public access to the NB Trail for Pierrette's signature. He would also develop an article for the NB Naturalist on the topic.

12. Next meetings

January 22, 2000 and March 18, 2000; both meetings 11:00 a.m., Loring Bailey Hall, Lounge on ground floor.

13. Adjournment

LA FEDERATION DES NATURALISTES DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

TOUS ENSEMBLE POUR LA SAUGARDE DE LA NATURE

Formulaire de Membre

La cotisation pour l'année 2000 est annuellement de \$15 au Canada et \$20 pour les autres pays. La cotisation doit être envoyée à la préposée aux abonnements: Jean E. Wilson, 2 Neck Road, Quispamsis, N.B., E2G-1L3

.....Réabonnement

.....Nouvelle Abonnement

Nom.....

Adresse.....

.....Code postale.....

Téléphone.....Courrier électronique

Club fédéré.....

Abonnement Cadeau

Nom de receveur.....

Adresse.....

.....Code postale.....

Nom de donneur.....

Adresse.....

.....Code postale.....

Une note de bienvenue et de souhait sera envoyée au nom ci-haut mentionné en votre nom et celui de la Fédération.

Merci pour votre appui!

Birds, birds everywhere, and not a pair of binoculars to be found

Johanne McInnis

It all started over the summer months when I got a promotion at work. The new job involved some travelling, mostly to more remote areas of our province, such as Fosterville, Four Falls and Gillespie, tiny little places situated in the Woodstock-Grand Falls area. Now, although I was raised in a sleepy little city called Campbellton I have been living in the fast lanes of the big city of Saint John for 13 years and have grown to appreciate the fringe benefits of living in a metropolitan area. Back to my story.....

On my first day of travel I was destined for Bloomfield. In my trunk are my suitcase, my briefcase and my camera. Next to me in the car are my trusty highway map and my cell phone. As I pull out onto the highway and speed toward my destination the scenery is all the same: Cars speeding by me at 130km/h, pavement, guard rails and road signs. But as I begin to leave the areas of civilization and head into the woods so to speak of course things start to change dramatically. Speeding cars are replaced by tractors pulling hay bales, pavement is now chip sealed roads, guard rails have disappeared altogether and road signs are few and far between. The air is cleaner, the trees and plants are abundant and to my amazement there are birds everywhere. Not a word of exaggeration when I say flocks of blue jays sitting overhead in the birch trees watching me drive by in my little car. Sparrows, robins, warblers everywhere. I slowed down to catch a glimpse, straining my eyes to try and identify what I was looking at, almost driving off the road a few times. Binoculars? Field guides? Forgot them home, never thought of putting anything like that in the car. That's what happens when you are still a novice?!

A few weeks later I'm back in the area on my way to Centreville. I'm travelling with the window down, the air is sweet and because I'm only doing 30 km/h I can hear the birds. They are everywhere. Suddenly I look up and sitting on a telephone wire is a bird which looks unlike anything I've ever seen before. I slow down and park the car to admire it for a few seconds. Mentally I remind myself to give me a kick for forgetting to pack the binoculars again so I grab a piece of paper and jot down a few distinctive traits about it. Once he was bored with me, he flew away to the other side of the road and I continued on with my journey wondering if I would be able to identify him from memory once I got home. The next week I knew I would be headed up that way so I made sure to put my

binoculars and one of my bird books in the trunk so that I would be prepared this time. Up to Four Falls I go, content that if I saw something this time I'd at least have some equipment with me to help me better identify what I'm looking at. But to my dismay, the trip is uneventful and I see nothing! It's now the beginning of September and I'm back on the road, going to Forest City this time for another site visit. Birds everywhere again. The same little bird is sitting on the wire so I stop my car in excitement and open the trunk to find: Nothing?! I scrambled to the back seat and looked everywhere, no book, no binoculars? Confused I get back into the driver's seat and look up to find an empty wire! When I got back home I tell my husband about my misfortune as I watch his face change to a sheepish grin. "Sorry honey, I took your birding stuff out of the trunk last weekend. I thought you forgot them in the car so I brought them back in the house". I laughed and shook my head because I know he meant well.

Last week of September and I'm back on the road, going to Andover. The leaves are changing colors, the landscape is gorgeous and the morning air is crisp. Sure enough, sitting on a telephone wire is that little bird I had seen several times earlier in the summer. Darn, no binoculars again?! I stop the car on the other side of the road and try to take a look at him. I know it's a hawk but what kind? I look down to see my cell phone on the seat next to me. I pick it up and dial a number frantically. "Hi mom, did I wake you? Oh sorry, listen I'm in Andover. Andover. It's near Woodstock and... what? Oh, I'm up here on business. Listen, I'm sitting on the side of the road looking at a bird. Yes a bird! It looks like a hawk but it's really small... What? Binoculars? Well, I forgot them. Book? Forgot that too. Anyway, he's bigger than a robin and his back looks gray and his beak is.... Mom, what are you laughing at me for?" My mother in her half asleep wisdom reminded me that the birding world had me in its talons and that eventually I would pack my trunk with a permanent pair of binoculars and that the back window would be littered with bird books galore. I smiled and thought to myself well that's not really that bad, hehehe!!! I made it home that evening and looked through my books eventually identifying the little Kestrel I had spent the better part of the summer chasing in the woods and fields of the Woodstock area. Birds, birds everywhere and no binoculars to be found? Not next summer that's for sure!!!

NATURE NEWS – AUTUMN, 1999

David Christie

It's somewhat paradoxical that such a mild autumn as 1999 should bring strong early flights of several winter birds. The answer of course lies in food shortages farther north, as well perhaps to the productivity of a nesting season that had got an early start. In New Brunswick, this last year of the 1990s has surely seemed an expression of global warming. Note the abundance of some warm-water invertebrates in the Bay of Fundy.

Birds

This season's bird rarities were highlighted by a **Sandwich Tern** at Miscou, a **Pacific Loon** off Grand Manan and a very unexpected provincial-first, a **Broad-billed Hummingbird** in Albert County. Those birds were well documented, being photographed and seen by several to many observers. Unfortunately, three other potential additions to the list, a **Wilson's Plover** at Grand Manan, a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** at Fredericton, and probable **Cave Swallows** at Cape Jourimain could not be relocated and will remain sightings documented by a single observer. Major influxes of **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** and **Northern Cardinals** reached across the whole province.

The **Pacific Loon**, an adult in winter plumage was well seen and photographed at close range, both sitting and in flight, during a pelagic trip about one mile east of Ross Island, GM (SIT, MNC). It could well become the second accepted provincial record of this species.

Greater Shearwaters were numerous about Grand Manan and stayed late, with hundreds still being reported during the last half of November. With them was a late **Sooty Shearwater** in the Grand Manan Channel Nov. 23 (RLeB). A large count of **Manx Shearwaters**, 53, was seen from the Grand Manan ferry Aug. 23 but there were "probably more, as most were far from the ferry" (R. Ken F. Edwards). Single **Northern Fulmars** were observed east of White Head Island Sep. 25 (SIT, MNC) and Oct. 2 (DSC, DGG), and in the Grand Manan Channel, Oct. 9 (JGW, SIT, RS).

It was not a special fall for southern herons. A **Great Egret** tarried at Cap Brûlé, near Shediac, from Aug. 31 till the weekend of Sep. 18-19 (v.o.) and one appeared briefly at Cape Tormentine, Sep. 9 (FD, Joyce Dubé). One **Cattle Egret** was noted at a Shediac Cape farm ca. Nov. 7 (Daniel DeYturalde, fide

SIT) and another settled in about the yards and gardens of Seal Cove Nov. 15+ (Carmen & Peter Roberts+). On the 16th it caught a goldfinch under the Roberts' feeder, but the finch struggled and escaped.

There were relatively few reports of **Snow Goose** this fall, but they included the following "blue" morphs, an adult Oct. 3 and 10 at Shannonvale, near Dundee (ML, AWA), one at Coverdale Oct. 17-21 (RS+), and an immature with a drooping wing at Cap Brûlé sewage lagoon from sometime in November into December (Juliette Pellerin).

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was discovered on the Dorchester sewage lagoon, c. Nov. 16 (RPC). A **Red-head** was at the Cap Brûlé sewage lagoon, c. Oct. 24 (RAM); there were 3 at Calhoun Marsh, near Riverside-Albert, Oct. 25 (RJW) and then one till Nov. 9 (DSC). A "splendid male" **King Eider** accented a flock of Commons at Shediac Bridge Nov. 10 (SIT) and two males were seen at St. Andrews Nov. 23 & 25 (DGG+, Jim Evans).

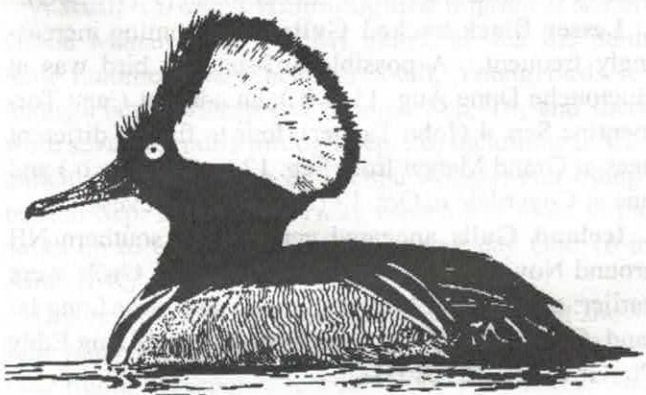
Two concentrations of **Northern Pintail** were reported: 125-150 on a DU impoundment near Memramcook Nov. 11 (AC, Valmond Bourque) and 55 at Gray Brook Marsh, Hillsborough, Nov. 13 (SDW). There was the usual scattering of **Gadwall** reports and a good count of 30-40 at Sackville c. Oct. 16 (RLeB).

A "huge raft" of **scaup** sp., "upwards of 2000 were floating along the tide line," off Oak Point, Oct. 17, "too far off to separate species," (JDE). This seems to me an unprecedentedly large fall concentration.

Observers at the Pt. Lepreau Bird Observatory encountered an unexpectedly heavy movement of **scooters** on Oct. 3 — similar to the peaks in spring. Tallied were 5403 Blacks, 7445 Surfs, and 1008 White-winged (EP, RAM, JWh, RP). "All flocks passed very close to the Point, many stopped directly in front of the Observatory, and when they resumed their journey, they always headed into Maces Bay." A considerable movement of **Common Eiders** was seen there Sep. 29, when 1420 (95% subadult males) arrived and settled off the point (KMacI).

Harlequin Ducks reported were a male in a migrating flock of eider off Blacks Harbour, Oct. 9 (JGW, SIT, RS), three off Bon Ami Rocks, Dalhousie, Oct. 26 (Jim Clifford) and 2 pairs at Pt. Lepreau Oct. 30 (Ian & Heather Cameron).

Mike Lushington thought that it seemed early for such large numbers as the 125+ **Barrow's Goldeneyes** he saw at Dalhousie Oct. 24. Observers on the Restigouche found **Bufflehead** unexpectedly numerous this fall, as exemplified by 20-25 at Atholville sewage lagoon Oct. 31 (ID, RGi). The 75-100 **Hooded Mergansers** at Eel River Bar Oct. 10 (ML, AWa) were usual for recent years.



A good bunch of **Ruddy Ducks** appeared this fall. The main concentrations reported were 22 at Calhoun Marsh Oct. 25 (RJW), 17 at Lancaster sewage lagoon, Saint John, Oct. 29 (JGW, JnW), and up to 24 at Salisbury sewage lagoon in mid November (RS). In the north a male was on the Eel River headpond Aug. 25 (JC) and another at Atholville sewage lagoon Oct. 31 to Nov. 6 (ID, RGi+).

The Acadian Peninsula continued its dominance of **Black Vulture** reports with one visiting a compost pile at Petite-Lamèque from Aug. 30 to Sep. 8 (HC+). **Turkey Vultures** continued to be seen regularly in their breeding area east of Saint John. The maximum reported was 14 at Hammond River Aug. 1 (RLeB). The latest there were two immatures between Rothesay and Saint John Airport Oct. 13 (DJC). A bit farther east, five were noted near Millstream 24 Sep (Janet and Hugh Cunningham). Farther afield there was one at Taymouth Sep. 24 (JS) and another hanging around the Memramcook area from mid October to c. Nov. 1 (*fide* AC), and one at Miscou Nov. 4 (HC, RAC).

A young **Osprey** was calling repeatedly from a nest near Herring Cove, Campobello Island, Oct. 1; another Osprey chased off a raven that came close, "adding weight to the theory that this nest is still active, at least a month late" (KMacI).

A **Cooper's Hawk** was seen at Pt. Lepreau Sep. 29 (KMacI). Two or three **Red-shouldered Hawks** near the mouth of the Gouamitz River, Victoria Co., Aug. 24 were somewhat farther north than most of our summer records. One bird, very agitated, "circled overhead screaming, while one or possibly two other birds replied from the forest canopy" (Dwayne Sabine). An early **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen between Scoudouc and Cape Tormentine Sep. 7 (NB+). Others appeared on schedule beginning Oct. 21.

An adult and an immature **Golden Eagle**, usually only one at a time, drew lots of attention to the Restigouche estuary around Flatlands and Morrissey Rock Nov. 2-8 (v.o.). A "magnificent one" perched in a tree near McGowans Corner, Nov. 30 (Ian & Heather Cameron). An adult was reported at St. Andrews Oct. 1 (David F. Smith).

Three immature **Purple Gallinules** strayed to our province. One in distress was taken in for rehabilitation from Jacquet River Oct. 7 (LD). The following day, Roger Guitard located another in the same area. The third frequented parking lots and lawns at Fundy Trail Parkway interpretive centre at Big Salmon River, St. John Co., Oct. 10-11 (MJC+). There was a concentration of 19 **American Coots** at Calhoun Marsh, Nov. 7 (RJW, MNC).

A **Sandhill Crane** was at Petite-Lamèque Sep. 5-9 (Jean-Gilles Chiasson+).

A birding tour leader, Peter Mitchell, described a plover at Long Pond Beach, GM, Sep. 16 as an adult male **Wilson's Plover** in breeding plumage. He mentioned the larger size relative to Semipalmated Plovers, the single wide breastband, and the large bill and has submitted a written account. Other people covered this beach the day before and after without seeing it. This southern species is not on the provincial list.

Some excellent counts of shorebirds were 336 **Lesser Yellowlegs** on the Petitcodiac River mudflats at Riverview Aug. 16 (SDW), 69 **Hudsonian Godwits** at Maisonnnette Dune Aug. 15 (MD) and 387 **Red Knots** there Oct. 24 (MD). 'Peep' sandpipers, mainly **Semipalmated**, peaked in early August with reported estimates of 200,000 to 300,000 at Johnsons Mills July 31 (Canadian Wildlife Service), 200,000 at Mary's Point Aug. 4 (Dominique Chaput), and 300,000 at Dorchester Cape Aug. 7 (Bob Blake).

There were more reports of stray **Marbled Godwits** than usual but none stayed around for long: Castalia Marsh, Aug. 28 (Christine Cornell, Kevin Tutt, Hank Deichmann), Maisonnnette Dune Sep. 20 (MD), St. An-

draws Sep. 20 (TD), and Saints Rest Marsh, Oct. 1 (B&C). There was also a possible at Miscou Island Aug. 2 (MGD+).

A couple of juvenile **Western Sandpipers** were noticed: at Harvey Bank, Albert Co., Sep. 19-20 (DSC, EMM+) and Saints Rest Beach, Saint John, Sep. 23-24 (Alma & Verna White, JDE, JGW, JnW). Between Aug. 29 and Sep. 23 there were single **Baird's Sandpipers** at the Fundy Trail Parkway (JPG, SS, MJC), Miscou Lighthouse (HC, RAC), Miscou bridge (NP), Long Pond Beach (SIT, EP), Mary's Point (DSC+) and Saints Rest Beach (SIT, MNC). A **Curlew Sandpiper**, an adult moulting into winter plumage, was identified at Long Pond Beach, GM, Sep. 10 (*fide* BED).

A **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, was reported at Wilkins Field, Fredericton, Sep. 23 (BJS) and written documentation submitted. Accompanying five **Pectorals**, the most similar species, it was described as similar but redder-crowned, less streaked and lacking a sharp break in the pattern on the breast. The first of this Siberian nester to be reported in New Brunswick, it could not be relocated for confirmation.

Only three **Stilt Sandpipers** were reported: an adult at Cap Bimet, near Shediac, Aug. 11 (SDW), one in a DU impoundment, Taylor Village Rd., near Memramcook, Sep. 9 (MNC information line) and three that day at the Memramcook River causeway (AC). It was a good fall for **Buff-breasted Sandpipers**. At Malbaie Nord, Miscou I., one to three were seen Aug. 30 to Sep. 2 (MD+), five on Sep. 12 (MD) and one on Sep. 27 (MD). There was also one at the drained DU impoundment on Taylor Village Rd., Memramcook, Sep. 6-13 (RLeB, AC+). A definite **Long-billed Dowitcher** was seen at the drained impoundment in the 2nd week of September (AC).

A moulting juvenile **Wilson's Phalarope** was at Lac Frye, Miscou I., Aug. 21 to Sep. 6 (Michel Chiasson+), possibly the same one at Malbaie North Sep. 6 (MD); two at Sackville Waterfowl Park Sep. 7-8 (Andrew Macfarlane); two at Taylor Village Road Sep. 11 (AC); and a late one in mid October at Bathurst (RG).

The usual **Parasitic** and **Pomarine Jaegers** were noted around Grand Manan, and there was one at Miscou Island Aug. 29 (HC) and another in mid October (RG). Sep. 25 was a great day for **Great Skua** at Great — excuse me — Grand Manan. Two were seen by one pelagic trip and one by another (SIT, MNC; AMacL+). Another skua, presumed to be a Great, was observed from the ferry near the northern end of Grand Manan Nov. 27 (AS).

An adult **Laughing Gull** was at Lac Frye, Miscou July 31 and Aug. 6 (MD; RLeB). One of this species passed close at Pt. Lepreau Oct. 3 (EP, RAM, JWh, RP). **Little Gulls** put in an appearance at Cap Brûlé sewage lagoon Sep. 6-7 (RAM) and Miscou Lighthouse Oct. 10+ (HC, RG). Single **Black-headed Gulls** were noted between the weekend of 18-19 Sep. and Nov. 13, at Cap Brûlé (N.B. Bird Information Line), Inkerman (JGR+, HC), Big Pond on Deer I. (KMacI), Blacks Harbour (DGG+) and Pocologan (JGW, DJC).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls are becoming increasingly frequent. A possible 3rd-summer bird was at Buctouche Dune Aug. 15 (ML), an adult at Cape Tormentine Sep. 4 (John Tanner), four to five of different ages at Grand Manan from Sep. 12 to Oct. 9 (v.o.) and one at Coverdale c. Oct. 17 (RS, Linda Steeves).

Iceland Gulls appeared generally in southern NB around Nov. 8-13. A couple of **Glaucous Gulls** were earlier: a 1st-winter bird at salmon cages near Long Island, GM, Sep. 6 (LM) and a 2nd-winter at Long Eddy Pt., GM, Oct. 22 (BED).

There were frequent observations of **Caspian Terns** during September between Shediac and Cape Tormentine, with a maximum of 12 at the Cape Sep. 9 (FD). Also noted were an adult at The Whistle, GM, Sep. 23 (SIT, MNC), two at Pt. Lepreau Oct. 3 (EP+), and a rare inland one at Mactaquac Dam 26 Sep (BJS+).

The adult **Sandwich Tern** discovered by Hilaire Chiasson at Lac Frye, Miscou I. Aug. 2 and seen by numerous observers that day and again on Aug. 4 (MD) is the third confirmed record of that southern tern in the province.

A vagrant **White-winged Dove** attended Roger Guillard's feeder at Pointe-Verte Oct. 13-17.

A presumed escapee **Monk Parakeet** was seen at Perry Pt., near Kingston, Aug. 1-5 (Gail Eastwood, Betty & Walter Mitham), then appeared a few kilometres away at Meenan's Cove Aug. 5-9 (Pat and John Beyea; JGW, JnW), when it associated with a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds.

CUCKOO! CUCKOO! was a frequent cry this autumn. A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** flight of major proportions swept across the province. It was probably similar to the best previous, but produced more reports because of more active observers. The first was on Sep. 12 at White Head Island (JGW, JnW), the latest that I know of at Pointe-Verte Oct. 10-15 (RG). As usual, most were seen at Grand Manan and along the Fundy coast (where Eileen Pike said a birder couldn't miss seeing one, unless they stayed indoors with the

blinds drawn), but this year there were also several northern birds, mostly towards the end of the flight: at Pointe-Verte, Atholville/Tide Head, Inkerman, Bathurst, Richardville, and Pt. La Nim. Amongst the Yellow-billed bonanza, a couple of Black-billed were reported, at White Head Island Sep. 25 (AMacL+) and Miscou Sep. 24 (RAC, HC).

A **Northern Hawk Owl** was reported just outside Campbellton ca. Oct. 7 (fide MGD).

A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** migrant at sea off Grand Manan Aug. 7 (LM) indicated that the adult male hummers were heading south. Young birds remained fairly widespread through Sep. 16, and there were several reports through Sep. 26, including at Miramichi Sep. 20 (Eldon & Thelma Rogers) and Campbellton Sep. 24 (MGD). There were a few more in the south up to Oct. 1, and a final one all day Oct. 10 in Alma (DR).

On Oct. 19, the day after Albert County's first snowfall, Mary Majka and I journeyed to Mapleton Road, near Elgin, in response to a call from a gentleman who wanted to know what to do about a lingering hummer. Finding a female **Broad-billed Hummingbird**, a wanderer from Arizona or Mexico, was a real surprise! It must have arrived in September, before or about the time that the last Ruby-throats left, as Keith Warren never had a gap in hummingbird visitation at his feeder. The bird, the second or third Canadian record, attracted about 200 observers before it was captured Oct. 25 because it was threatened by cold weather. It is now under study in our greenhouse.



David Christie photo

There were numerous reports of more southern woodpeckers. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: imm. at North Head Sep. 25 (SIT, MNC); adult there Sep. 26 (KMacI); imm. at Alma Oct. 3 (DR); Campbellton Oct. 21 (fide MGD); adult at Dock Road, GM Oct. 27 (Evelyn Peters, BED); imm. at feeder at Harvey Bank Nov. 1-2 (Vi Bodiam & Brian Buckland, DSC, EMM); imm. at Caraquet Nov. 6-23 (Jeannette St-Pierre+); imm. at White Head Island Nov. 24 (fide BED). **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: a male at Hopewell Cape before Oct. 27 (fide DB), may have moved to a feeder at Albert Mines Oct. 27-29 (RPC, Jean Inglis), and then to Edgetts Landing, where it was seen from Oct. 31 into winter (DB+); male at Bancroft Pt., GM, Oct. 27 (BED); Riverview Oct. 27 (Shirley Hunt); male at Long Eddy Pt. Oct. 30 (BED); male at Petite-Rivière-de-l'Île, Lamèque I. Oct. 31 into winter (Égide Chiasson); Nov. 8-22 Saint John (Joan Pearce+); male at St. Andrews Nov. 10-25 (Marion Wilder+); female at Seal Cove Nov. 16 (fide BED); female at Cocagne Nov. 23-30 (Louis Cormier+); pair at Tattons Corner, near North Head, Nov. 27 (fide BED).

Three **Great Crested Flycatchers** stayed till, or more likely arrived in, October: at Tide Head Oct. 6 (Sandra & Tom Gulliver), Hammond River Oct. 17 (JGW), and Long Eddy Pt. Oct. 28 (BED). The Western Kingbird at New Horton, near Harvey, Albert Co., Oct. 20-24 (DSC+) seems to have been the only one noted.

A couple of late **Tree Swallows** were seen in the Chaleur region, Nov. 5 (RG), probably near Pointe-Verte. In September, Hurricane Gert seems to have pushed **Cliff Swallows** well to the northeast. On Sep. 24, the day following passage of the storm, 50 were seen flying from NE to SW and down the west side of Miscou Island (RJW+). They were suspected to have come in off the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Others were noted then on P.E.I. and Cape Breton. A single was at Southwest Head, GM, Oct. 8 (SIT, JGW, RS). A late **Barn Swallow** attempted to catch insects over a pond at Taylor Village Oct. 21 (AC).

A major storm swept large numbers of **Cave Swallows** northeastward from the southwestern USA at the beginning of November. Many occurred around the Great Lakes and along the Atlantic coast in and near New Jersey; a few appeared farther northeast into Quebec and Connecticut. The circumstances suggest that two swallows Kathy Popma saw at Cape Jourimain on Nov. 7 were this species. "They fluttered around and under the Confederation Bridge and landed. They were certainly orange and black in the

head, had square tails, long pointed wings, but the details of the forehead and rump patches escaped me. One had a buffier breast than the other which was lighter." A few days of cold beginning that day was poor for swallow survival.

Blue Jays were numerous and very conspicuous at feeders from late September into November. Many people complained about the amount of food they were consuming. A flight of 150 was noted at Long Eddy Point Sep. 27 (AC, BED).

There was a very noticeable movement of **Black-capped Chickadees** at Alma on Labour Day weekend, Sep. 4-6 (RJW). At Mary's Pt. a significant movement was noticed Sep. 12-18, including one loose flock of 100+ moving together Sep. 12 (DSC). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** appeared prominently at feeders but many went farther south. There was a considerable influx of **White-breasted Nuthatches** from New England, starting in the last week of September. They were widespread at feeders, including in areas where often rare.

One, or possibly two **Carolina Wrens** were being seen in Fredericton, about 1 km apart, Oct. 21+ (DGG, Jean Noble).

There appeared to be relatively few **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** this fall: Fundy Trail Parkway Aug. 29 (JPG, SS); North Head Sep. 24 (MNC); 2 at Caraquet Sep. 25 (RL); Rockwood Park Sep. 27 (MJC); Fundy National Park HQ Oct. 29-30 (RJW, JGW).

There were frequent reports of singles to small groups of **Eastern Bluebirds** in October. Hilaire Chiasson reported a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Inkerman Ferry Oct. 24, a difficult identification to make. A young **Swainson's Thrush**, barely able to fly, at Long Eddy Pt. Aug. 30 "must have come from a late nesting; it is possible Swainson's Thrush could have been double-brooded this summer, due to the incredibly early (two to three weeks) start of the breeding season" (BED).

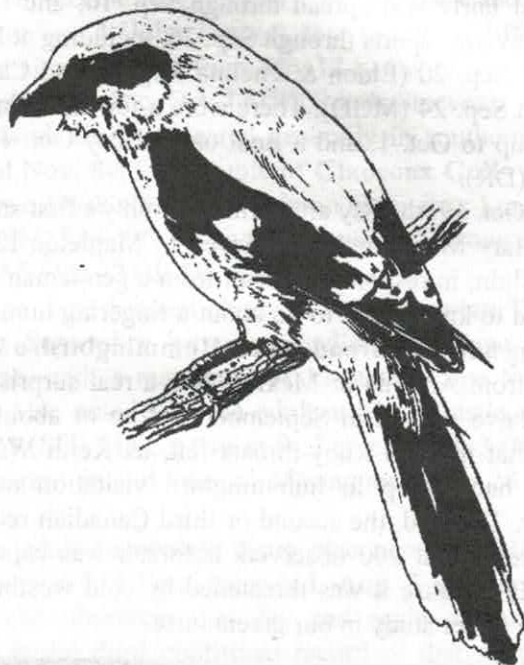
Several reports of **Northern Mockingbirds** came from Grand Manan, Moncton and Shediac areas. There were three **Brown Thrashers** at White Head Island Sep. 25 & 28 (AAM+, PJ) and one at Campobello Oct. 1 (KMacI).

The first **American Pipits** were seen Aug. 29 at Southwest Head, GM (DSC) and Aug. 31 at Quaco Marsh (5—MJC).

A good flight of **Bohemian Waxwings** came quite early. The first were three at Caraquet Sep. 28 (MD) and some at Campbellton in the last week of Septem-

ber (Flora Kelly). They were frequent after Oct. 20. Writing Nov. 10, Stu Tingley said they had been "passing over the yard for the past two weeks or so. I'm rarely outside for more than 10 or 15 minutes without seeing a flock pass over, usually small flocks of 20 or less but one flock numbered 150 and another about 80."

There was also a large, fairly early flight of **North-ern Shrikes**, the first an adult at White Head Island Oct. 8 (SIT, JGW, RS), then others Oct. 17-19 and frequently thereafter.



A **White-eyed Vireo** was studied at close range for about 15 minutes at McAdam Oct. 11 (Janick Larouche). Just one **Blue-winged Warbler** was reported, a young male banded at Long Eddy Pt. Aug. 25 (BED). There was also an observation of **Golden-winged Warbler** by some British birders at North Head Sep. 10.

Orange-crowned Warblers were reported at Atholville Aug. 29 (MGD), White Head Island Sep. 14 (JGW, JnW); Big Salmon River Sep. 16 (MJC), White Head Island Sep. 25 (AMacL+), Fredericton North Oct. 24 (PAP), Fredericton Oct. 26 (PAP), Fundy National Park HQ area Oct. 28 (RJW). There were a fair number of **Pine Warbler** reports, mostly in October and early November. To the north there was one at Petite-Lamèque Sep. 4 (HC), another at Caraquet Oct. 27 (Rosita Lanteigne).

A late **Magnolia Warbler** "tried to get into the light at our kitchen window" at Taymouth Nov. 13 (appeared to be an adult, not a juvenile—JS). There were two late **Wilson's Warblers** on Oct. 29, near Lancaster sewage lagoon (JGW, JnW) and at Alma (DR).

Wandering **Yellow-breasted Chats**, often secretive until winter sets in, were found at St. Andrews Sep. 20 (young female banded—TD), North Head Sep. 25 (SIT, MNC), Big Salmon River Oct. 15 (MJC), Alma Oct. 30 & 7 Nov. 7 (DR+), Millidgeville, Saint John Nov. 19+ (MJC), and Shippagan Nov. 24+ (LDeg).

A late immature **Scarlet Tanager** was feeding on berries at Campbellton Nov. 4-6 (RGi+). A newspaper report of a female **Western Tanager** at St. Andrews Nov. 12-14 was not confirmed.

A good influx of **Northern Cardinals** commenced in mid October and was noted especially about Nov. 6-8. Birds scattered across the south of the province but also appeared in the north: male at Moulin Morneault Oct. 31 (Pauline Morneault); female at Pointe-Verte Nov. 6 (RG); female at Tracadie-Sheila Nov. 7-8 (Yvette Boudreau); three at Shippagan Nov. 8+, (LDeg); female at Balmoral Nov. 12-15 (fide MGD), and one at Miscou Nov. 21 (RAC).

An immature **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, or possibly a **Black-headed Grosbeak**, appeared at Denyse Zyveniuk's feeder at Tide Head about the last week of November. Either is a great rarity at this season. The photos will be studied by the Bird Records Committee.

As usual, quite a few **Indigo Buntings** were seen along the Fundy coast. One was also reported at a feeder in Tide Head in the last week of October (fide MGD). Several **Dickcissels** were reported along the Fundy coast from Aug. 20 to late November. In the north there was one at Petite-Lamèque on Oct. 11 (Jacques Guignard).

A few **Eastern Towhees** appeared beginning Oct. 16 when there was one at Inkerman (JG Robichaud) and a male at Long Eddy Pt. (AS). Another in the north was at a feeder in Madran, near Petit-Rocher, in mid Oct. (fide Pierre Duguay).

There was an adult (I think) **Clay-colored Sparrow** at North Head Sep. 15 (JGW, NP), an immature there Sep. 24-25 (SIT, MNC), one at White Head Island Sep. 25 & 28 (AMacL+, PJ) and one at Alma Oct. 24-31 (RJW, DR+).

Most **Field Sparrows** were noted at Grand Manan but there were also individuals at Alma Sep. 25 (DR)

and Oct. 30 (JGW, JnW), Fredericton Oct. 4 (BJS), and Lamèque Oct. 26 (HC, RAC).

More **Lark Sparrows** than usual strayed this way: immature at Alma Aug. 29 (RJW), another there 10 Oct. (RJW), Miscou Lighthouse Sep. 10 (RL+); White Head Island Oct. 1 (DGG); Lamèque Oct. 11-15 (HC, RAC); adult at Wells, Rothesay Nov. 3-6 (John Hanson+); Harvey, Albert Co. Nov. 13 (B&C).

An "**Ipswich**" **Savannah Sparrow** was seen at Southwest Head, GM, Sep. 15 (JGW, NP) and one at Castalia at the end of September (AC).

A big movement of **Dark-eyed Juncos** took place in the third week of October. As of Oct. 24, there had been good numbers for two weeks in the Dalhousie area (ML). On Oct. 19, driving from Fundy National Park to Elgin to Mary's Pt. I estimated 3500 along the roadsides. The next day fewer than 100 were seen on the same trip, but juncos increased in numbers at Long Eddy Pt. where 21 were banded (BED). A female "**Oregon**" **Dark-eyed Junco** was reported Oct. 10 near Lancaster sewage lagoon, Saint John (EP, JWh).

Am. Tree Sparrows appeared Oct. 12 at Fredericton (SS) and Oct. 22 at Grand Manan (AS) while a **White-crowned Sparrow** was noted there Sep. 25 (SIT, MNC), the same day that **Lapland Longspur** was noted at Saints Rest, Saint John (JGW). There were 20 at Miscou Sep. 27 (MD).

A heavy, early movement of **Snow Buntings** began at the same time. They were seen on the weekend of Sep. 24-25 in back of Kedgwick (fide MGD) and Sep. 25 in the Campbellton area (ID). This species was numerous in last week of October, e.g., a lot along the NB Trail at Campbellton Oct. 20 (Lisette Drapeau, Margot Richard), 60 at Atholville that day (MGD); 200 at Quaco Marsh Oct. 27-28 (MJC); 300 at Cape Jourimain Oct. 28 (KP); 1000 at Taylor Village c. Nov. 1 (AC).

An immature **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen at Quaco Marsh, St. Martins, Oct. 26 (Chris Sears).

A **Common Redpoll** at a Campbellton feeder Sep. 13 (MGD) was very early. There were no more reports until a single was noted Oct. 22 at Long Eddy Pt. (BED). A few days later a strong flight commenced, including 300 at Long Eddy Pt. Oct. 30 (BED) and 500 at Moncton Nov. 8 (Oscar LeBlanc). Single redpolls visited feeders at Alma Oct. 26 (DR) and Mary's Pt. Oct. 29 (DSC) and flocks appeared at numerous feeders in mid November, considerably earlier than usual. A **Hoary Redpoll** visited a Pointe-Verte feeder Nov. 5 (RG).

A strong flight of **Pine Grosbeaks** occurred during November. With few cones on spruce trees anywhere in the province, generally few **White-winged Crossbills** were seen, except for "lots" at Eight Mile Lake, Restigouche Co. Oct. 23 (MGD) and several flocks passing NE over Alma Oct. 28 (RJW). **Red Crossbills** were of special interest this fall in Restigouche and Gloucester counties where they are not seen frequently. From three to six were appearing at two Tide Head feeders from late October through November (v. o.) and there were November observations of small numbers at Campbellton (MGD), Bas-Caraquet (MD) and Grande-Anse (Rodrigue Landry). Scattered records in the south included a few at feeders and the only substantial group, 40 at Riverview Nov. 22 (Chris Antle).

Mammals

The Nov. 5 *Times-Transcript* carried a recognizable photo of two **Canada Lynx** at the edge of a dirt road in Restigouche County. The photo was taken by Andre Mercier of Balmoral. To come upon a Lynx cooperative enough to be photographed several times is rare enough, but to have two together was extremely so. The newspaper states that the photos are believed to be the first taken of a Lynx in New Brunswick since 1975.

The big excitement in Bay of Fundy whale-watching this summer was the brief occurrence of two pods of **Orcas** or **Killer Whales**, one near Grand Manan and the other near Brier Island. Laurie Murison says that a report by a fisherman preceded the discovery by whale watcher Aug. 23, when Grand Manan boats watched "a pod of eight individuals - a large bull, a mother and calf and five others."

Sei Whales, a rare species in the bay were also observed this summer. There were several in the first week of August and the species was still present in mid September. They occur "in the vicinity of the right whales since they both feed on copepods - small but plentiful zooplankton" (LM)

Atlantic Right Whale behaviour was particularly interesting in September and October, when they were plentiful and there was often a lot of interaction between individuals. On Oct. 8 they could be seen from White Head Island "putting on a spectacular show just a few miles off" (SIT). On Oct. 29 at least six were seen unusually close to shore, "within 0.5 mile of Swallowtail. They were engaged in courtship behaviour, so were visible at the surface for a long time" (LM). The same day one was "making quite commotion" off Long Eddy Pt. (BED)

Amphibians & Fishes

Late November seemed almost as mild as mid October, so it's not really surprising that frogs were heard. On Nov. 27, **Wood Frogs** were calling in the Howard Brook area, near Windsor (JPG, DGG). The temperature was 14 degrees and it was raining lightly, good conditions for amphibians. Similarly, a **Spring Peeper** gave a few calls near Woodstock that weekend (Kent Orlando).

In early November there was press coverage about a suspected 'sea serpent' or 'dinosaur' that washed up on the western beach of Miscou Island about the third week of October. The partially decomposed animal, 25 to 30 feet long, puzzled many people who saw it, but Hilaire Chiasson suspected it was a **Basking Shark**, which was subsequently confirmed by Don McAlpine at the N.B. Museum. The much-talked-about 'back legs' of the animal were the claspers of a male, which can be up to 5 feet long on Basking Sharks.

Invertebrates

The warm summer and sea temperature led to occurrence of unusual invertebrates here. On August 11, the water where the Right Whales were was full of an invertebrate Laurie Murison had never seen before in the Bay. The Atlantic Reference Centre in St. Andrews suggested they could be **Horned Salp**, a primitive invertebrate that isn't usually found in the bay. "They form long double chains and have blue internal body parts but are otherwise clear. The larger and presumably more mature have two horns that look rather like the antennae on sea slugs or snails. The individual bodies are about 1 cm long" (LM).

The number of horned salps increased to become "so abundant now [in mid September] that they are found in the harbours and clinging to weirs. They are definitely mostly immature but some are mature and reproducing. The immature stages generally cling together in a double chain" (LM).

Another strange salp (*Salpa sp.*) in Grand Manan waters "looks like a clear jelly barrel (the salp) with a bizarre amphipod inside - also clear with a huge lobed head, four eyes and long claws on one of its sets of legs. There are often egg masses in the salp as well, probably from the amphipod. The salp is about 2 cm long. The amphipod reminds me of the aliens that emerge from stomachs in the movies" (LM).

The Atlantic Reference Centre also told Laurie that there was a very small jellyfish in the Bay as well, **Crown Jelly**, (*Nausithoe punctata*) which isn't supposed to be found farther north than Cape Hatteras.

Speaking of jellyfish, **freshwater jellyfish** (*Craspedacusta sowerbii*) were discovered at Silver Lake (Morice Pond) at Middle Sackville Aug. 29-30 (Andrew Grant, Theo & Julian Holownia & Sam Grundy-Glynn). A quick literature search seemed to indicate that this is the first record of this species east of Quebec.

On Castalia beach Aug. 30, Brian Dalzell found a "long gelatinous egg mass, 48 ft long, as big around as your wrist and containing thousands (ca. 75,000) of what looked like tiny eggs about 1 mm in diameter. They were white with dark centers (eyes?), but the white may have been from being cooked in the sun." Could this have eggs or perhaps masses of salps stuck together?



Abbreviations

AC Alain Clavette; AMacL Angus MacLean; AS Andrew Sharkey; AWa Andy Watson; B&C Norm, Gisele and Gilles Belliveau, Leona Cormier; BED Brian Dalzell; BJS Bev Schneider; DB Dwayne Biggar; DGG Don Gibson; DJC David J. Clark; DR Doreen Rossiter; DSC David Christie; DU Ducks Unlimited; EMM Mary Majka; FD Fred Dube; GM Grand Manan; HC Hilaire Chiasson; ID Irene Doyle; JC Jim Clifford; JDE Jennifer Day-Elgee; JGR Jean-Guy Robichaud; JGW Jim Wilson; JnW Jean Wilson; JPG Jim Goltz; JS Julie Singleton; JWh Janet Whitehead; KMacI Ken MacIntosh; KP Kathy Popma; LD Luc DeRoche; LDeG Lucille Degrace; LM Laurie Murison; MD Marcel David; MGD Margaret Gallant Doyle; MJC Merv Cormier; ML Mike Lushington; MNC Moncton Naturalists' Club; NB Norm Belliveau; NP Nelson Poirier; PAP Peter Pearce; PJ Paul Jones; RAC Rose-Aline Chiasson; RAM Rose-Alma Mallet; RGi Bob Gillis; RG Roger Guitard; RJW Rob Walker; RL Rosita Lanteigne; RLeB Roger LeBlanc; RP Roy Pike; RPC Bob Cotsworth; RS Ron Steeves; SDW Doug Whitman; SIT. Stu Tingley; SS Shirley Sloat; TD Tracey Dean; v.o. various observers

NATURE FILM AVAILABLE

Jim Wilson

The Saint John Naturalists' Club has a video copy of the excellent 50-minute film "SEASON OF THE EIDERS", produced by one of Canada's leading wildlife filmmakers, Robert Long. This film aired nationally on the Discovery Channel in 1999, and at the December meeting of the Saint John Naturalists.

Saint John Club members thoroughly enjoyed it. They then decided that it should be made available to any other naturalist club in the Province, either as the planned "main event" at a meeting, or as an emergency fill-in should a speaker be unable to fulfil an engagement on short notice.

In the event of the latter, your Club should contact me and I will be happy to put it on a bus or find some other way to get it to your meeting in time for airing. Of course, you would need a VCR and a large enough television screen, but believe me, it would be worth it!

The eider footage shown at the very beginning was shot during the winter at St. Andrews, N.B., and during the spring migration at Point Lepreau Bird Observatory (PLBO), just south of Saint John.

When Bob contacted us at the PLBO in early 1998 about his desire to come to this area, he was in the final year of filming a multi-year project on the life stories of the four species of North American eider ducks. It was an ambitious undertaking that had taken him all the way from the Aleutian Islands off Alaska to Baffin Island in Eastern Nunavut and from Hudson Bay to the Bay of Fundy.

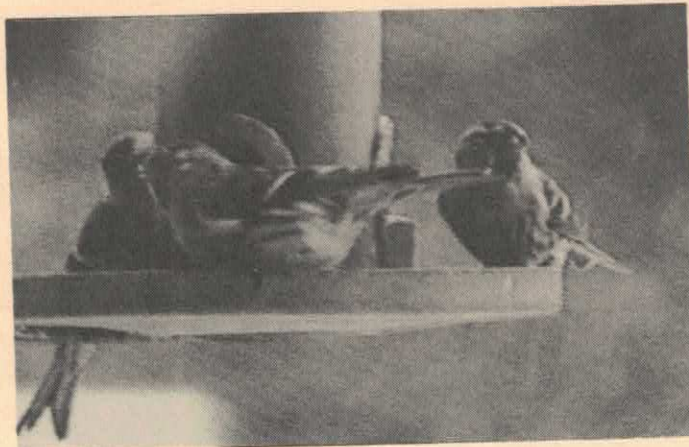
After filming migrating Common Eiders at Point Lepreau in April, he was off to Bon Portage Island in Nova Scotia to get footage of the birds on their breeding grounds there.

By the time he was finished filming there, he felt that he had such great footage of Atlantic eiders and that the "Atlantic eider story" was so compelling, that the project team decided to make it the focus of a separate film. They plan to use the remainder of their material for another film sometime in the future.

If your club is interested in showing this film at any time, please get in touch with me at the phone number or address shown below. The only thing that we ask is that you use it and then return the video to us as quickly as possible afterward, so it can be available to others. Our Club is most happy to make it available.

Jim Wilson, 2 Neck Road, Quispamsis, N.B., E2G 1L3; Tel: 506-847-4506, Fax: 506-849-0234

Reminder: please check the address label for your current NBFN membership status.
Un rappel: SVP verifier l'etiquette d'adresse du dernier magazine Le Naturaliste que vous avez reçu à savoir si vous êtes à date avec votre adhesion.



David Christie photo

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