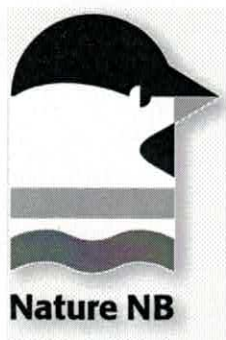


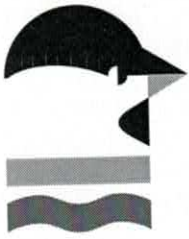
Vol. 37 No. 4 2010



Naturaliste du **NB** Naturalist



Bay of Fundy Cetaceans • Atelier : dortoir pour les chauve-souris •
Wild weasels of Fundy National Park



Nature NB

924 rue Prospect St.
Suite 110
Fredericton, NB E3B 2T9

Nature NB is a non-profit, charitable organization whose mission is to celebrate, conserve and protect New Brunswick's natural heritage, through education, networking and collaboration. (The former name of Nature NB – New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists / Fédération des naturalistes du Nouveau-Brunswick is retained for legal purposes.)

Nature NB est un organisme de bienfaisance à but non-lucratif qui a comme mission la célébration, la conservation et la protection du patrimoine naturel du Nouveau-Brunswick par l'éducation, le réseautage et la collaboration. (L'ancien nom de Nature NB, soit « Fédération des naturalistes du Nouveau-Brunswick / New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists », demeurera le nom légal de l'organisme.)

Nature NB (NBFN/FNNB) is a provincial affiliate of Nature Canada (formerly Canadian Nature Federation) and the Canadian Nature Network (CNN).

Nature NB (NBFN/FNNB) est un partenaire provinciale (N.-B.) du Réseau Canadien de la Nature (RCN) et affilié de Nature Canada (la Fédération Canadienne de la Nature).

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bluriver@nb.sympatico.ca. Information evenings every
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Chignecto Naturalists' Club, c/o CWS, Andrew Mac-
farlane, Box 6227, Sackville, E4L 1G6, 364-5047;
meets Sackville Public Library, 7:30 pm, 3rd Mon.,
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Club de Naturalistes de la Péninsule acadienne,
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E8P 2C6; réunions au Club de l'âge d'or Landry, 1^{er}
mercredi, sept. à juin; Le Gobe-mouche, mensuel.

Club de Naturalistes Vallée de Memramcook, a/s
Valmond Bourque, 12 rue Desbarres, Memramcook,
E4K 1E7, 758-1095, www.natureacadie.ca; réunions
2ième mardi du mois, sept. à juin, à l'amphithéâtre de
l'école Abbey-Landry, rue Centrale, Memramcook.

Club d'ornithologie du Madawaska Ltée,
a/s Musée historique du Madawaska, 195 boul.
Hébert, Edmundston, E3V 2S8, 737-5282 (Bert
Lavoie); www.umce.ca/com1; réunions à 19h00,
2ième mercredi, sept. à juin, Musée du Madawaska;
Le Jaseur, trimestriel.

Club les Ami(e)s de la Nature du sud-est Inc.,
a/s Normand Belliveau, CP 26024 Moncton, E1E 4H9,
532-4583, ami.e.snature@gmail.com; http://picasa-
web.google.com/Ami.e.snature; réunions alternant
entre Dieppe et Shédiac, 1er mercredi du mois; excu-
rions 3ième samedi ou dimanche; La Plume verte.

Fredericton Nature Club, Box 772, Station A,
Fredericton, E3B 5B4, 366-3079; meets Stepping
Stone Centre, 15 Saunders St., 7:00 pm, 1st Wed.,
Sept-May; newsletter.

Kennebecasis Naturalist Society, c/o Ms H. Folkins,
827 Main St., Sussex, E4E 2N1; meets St. Paul's
United Church Hall, 7:30 pm, 4th Mon., Sept.-June;
quarterly newsletter.

Miramichi Naturalist Club, President: Leonel Richard,
773-3774; lrichard@nbnet.nb.ca; www.miramichi-
naturalistsclub.ca; meets 6:30 pm, 2nd Mon. in the
Friendly Neighbor Senior Citizen Centre, Sutton Rd.

Nature Moncton, PO Box 28036, Moncton, NB E1C
9M1, Info Line: 506-384-6397; www.naturemoncton.
org; Meets Church of the Nazarene, 21 Fieldcrest
Drive, 7 pm, 3rd Tues., Sept.-June; Monthly newsletter.

NB Botany Club / Club botanique du N.-B., c/o
Richard Fournier, Faculty of Forestry, Université de
Moncton, 165boul Hébert, Edmundston, E3V 2S8,
737-5050 ext 5258, organizes 5-8 outings/year, AGM
in September. www.mace.com/botanyclub/home/
html.

Restigouche Naturalists' Club, c/o Mike Lushington,
214 Rosebery Street, Campbellton, E3N 2H5,
684-3258; meets Village-Campbellton Nursing Home,
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Saint John Naturalists' Club, 7 Bridle Path Lane,
Rothsey, E2E 5S7; meets N.B. Museum at Market
Square, 7:30 pm 2nd Mon., Sept.-May, elsewhere in
June; monthly newsletter
www.saintjohnnaturalistsclub.org.

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Cover Photo / page de couverture, Fin whale / Rorqual commun.

Photo: Laurie Murison

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SVP, si vous êtes membres de Nature NB faites parvenir vos observations nature aux compilateurs qui rédigent des rapports réguliers dans le Naturaliste du NB.

Please submit articles for the next issue by **January 31, 2010.**

S.v.p. soumettre les articles pour le prochain numéro avant le **31 janvier, 2010.**

To / à Janet MacMillan, janetmac@nbnet.nb.ca

Sincere thanks to our many volunteers who contributed to this publication.

Merci beaucoup à tous les bénévoles dévoués qui ont contribué à cette publication.

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Naturaliste du NB 105

President's Message

Gart Bishop

Sounds of Nature

On a nearly windless day in mid-September I stood in the remains of a forested wetland that had been clear-cut the previous year. Black organic soils oozed out of ruts resulting from the passage of heavy machinery. For a moment I was saddened, but then the cottony white heads of dandelion-like seeds adorning tall robust plants caught my eye. I recognized the plant as Pilewort, also called Fireweed in some books (*Erechtites hieraciifolia*). In southern New Brunswick, Pilewort is found mostly in areas having been recently burned or disturbed, such as clear-cuts.

The white flowers are not particularly showy, and could easily be overlooked or ignored. However, on this day in September, when the flowers were long past, the bulging seed heads could not be ignored. I walked over to one of the almost metre high plants and touched it. Immediately the air was filled with hundreds of snowflake-like, parachuted seeds rising slowly and gradually drifting away. I walked to another plant and gave it a shake, then another and another.

I was magically surrounded by a late summer whiteout. Should anyone have been watching, the clear-cut became a dream-like background where a middle-aged fool was aimlessly running about rattling plant after plant, pausing only to observe with delight the effects of his actions.

Some naturalists can be naturally amused, even in a clear-cut. Perhaps delight in nature is wherever we look for it.

Nature NB Change in Leadership

The Executive of Nature NB regrets the departure of Interim Executive Director Jessica Scott in late October. We wish her well in her future endeavours. We are pleased to be able to announce that Afton Conneely has stepped into the Executive Director's shoes. Afton brings a charming accent and a new perspective and fresh energy to the position and we look forward to working with her until Vanessa's return in May.

À l'écoute de la nature

Mot du Président

Gart Bishop

Par une journée presque sans vent du mois de septembre dernier, je me tenais dans ce qu'il restait d'une zone humide forestière, qui avait été coupée à blanc, un an auparavant. On pouvait y voir ici et là des ornières recouvertes de sol noir, qui avait été exposée par le passage d'équipement lourd. En observant ce gâchis, je succombai, pour un instant, à la tristesse. Mais tout à coup, mon regard fut attiré par de grandes plantes robustes, au sommet cotonneux, contenant des graines ressemblant à ceux du Pissenlit. Je reconnus la plante comme l'Érechtite à feuilles d'épervière aussi nommée crève-z-yeux dans certains livres (*Erechtites hieraciifolia*). L'Érechtite à feuilles d'épervière se retrouve au Nouveau-Brunswick, surtout au sud de la province, dans des zones ayant été récemment brûlées ou largement dérangées, comme lors des coupes à blanc.

Les fleurs blanches de cette plante ne sont pas particulièrement spectaculaires et peuvent même passer facilement inaperçues. Par contre, en cette journée de septembre, alors que les fleurs étaient fanées depuis belle lurette, les sommets en graines étaient eux plutôt évidents. Je me

suis rapproché de l'une de ces plantes qui faisait presque un mètre de hauteur et l'ai touchée. Instantanément, l'air fut rempli de centaines de graines qui, avec leur petit parachute, remplissaient l'air comme des flocons de neige qui s'élevaient et s'envolaient au loin. Sous le charme, je me suis rendu à une autre plante, l'ai secouée et j'ai continué comme ça, allant de plante en plante jusqu'à ce que je sois littéralement entouré par une véritable tempête de graines, ce qui, malgré que l'on ne fut qu'à la fin de l'été, pouvait définitivement faire penser à de la neige. Si, par hasard, un passant avait alors débouché sur la coupe à blanc, il aurait, certes, pu s'étonner du spectacle qui s'offrait à ses yeux : un homme d'âge mûr courant follement de-ci de-là, secouant plante après plante et ne s'arrêtant que pour prendre le temps de jouir de l'effet de son action.

La preuve que certains naturalistes peuvent tout naturellement s'amuser même dans une coupe à blanc. Se pourrait-il, qu'en fin de compte, de petits bonheurs s'offrent à nous un peu partout en nature et que pour les découvrir il ne suffit que de bien regarder?

Changement à Fredericton, Nature NB

Le conseil exécutif de Nature NB regrette d'annoncer le départ de la directrice par intérim Jessica Scott. Nous lui souhaitons le meilleur dans le futur. Nous avons le plaisir de vous annoncer que Afton Conneelly prendra la relève jusqu'au retour de Vanessa en mai. Afton amène un accent charmant ainsi qu'une nouvelle perspective et une énergie abondante.

Botany Corner

Gart Bishop
Sussex

Wild Cucumber (Concombre grimpant) *Echinocystis lobata*

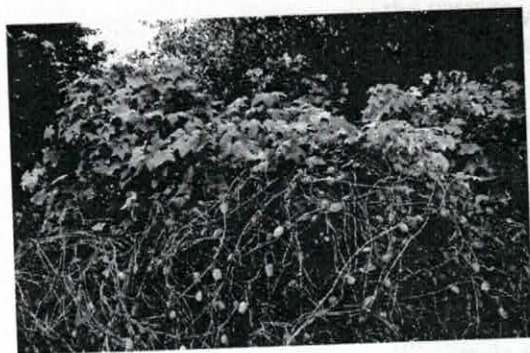


Photo 1 - Wild Cucumber growing over willows
Photo by G. Bishop

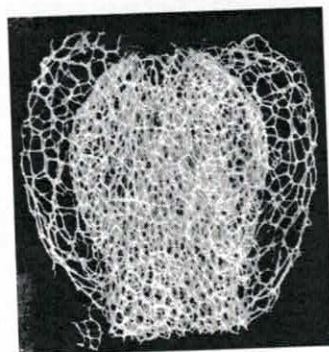
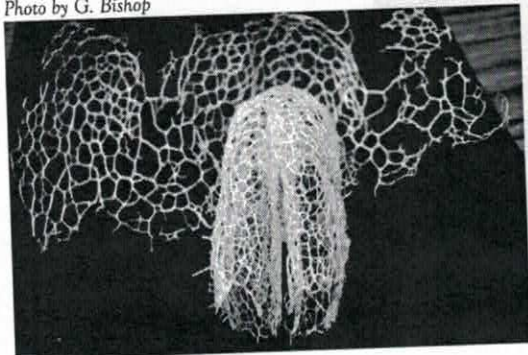


Photo 2 - Remains of fruit
Photo by G. Bishop

Photo 3 - "Lace pantaloons"
Photo by G. Bishop



Wild Cucumber (Concombre grimpant) [*Echinocystis lobata*] is found draped over hedgerows along the borders of fields, streams and brooks

throughout the province (see photo 1), but is especially common in the lower St. John River valley and its tributaries. It becomes more visible in late summer and early fall when it is flowering and in fruit. It grows throughout most of North America

where it has picked up many other names such as Wild Balsam-apple, Prickly Cucumber, Hedgehog Bladder, Mock-apple, Wild Mock Cucumber and Squirting Cucumber. It is a native annual species meaning that it sprouts from seed each year. Considering it can be 7 metres in length, it has a very speedy growth. Wild Cucumber is our only native member of the Gourd Family (Cucurbitaceae), which includes our garden cucumbers, squashes and pumpkins. It is also closely related to Luffa which is cultivated for its spongy texture and is used as scouring pads. If you look inside the Wild Cucumber's green fruit or wait until late fall or winter

when the outer layer is gone, you will see that the coarse networking of the pod looks like small scouring pads (see photo 2) resembling a miniature luffa sponge. The two valves of the pod are slightly parted, giving the whole structure

an appearance resembling a pair of 'lace pantaloons' (see photo 3).

Wild Cucumber is easily recognized in the fall by its plum-sized green fruit (see photo 4) that is covered with weak prickles. It has separate male and female greenish white flowers that occur in the leaf axils, the female flowers singly, the male flowers in elongated clusters. The sweet-smelling, six-petaled flowers attract insects for pollination, but the female flowers can also self-fertilize. The four large seeds (similar in size to those found in squash) are decoratively patterned (see photo 5 & 6), and either drop out from the dangling fruits in late September and October or are 'shot' out from their husk at speeds as great as 11.5m/sec. Apparently, if you find a pod at the right maturity, touching the pod will cause the seeds to shoot out. That's something I want to try next year; should be as much fun as springing the pods of 'Touch-me-not'.

Its five lobed maple-like leaves (see photo 7) occur alternately along the smooth stem that climbs by means of tightly wound tendrils that divide in 3. The tendrils are sensitive to touch and a coil forms when they come in contact with any sort of support. In early spring, the large pair of primary leaves (cotyledons) (see photo 8) can be easily spotted beneath the rosey remains of last year's plants. However if the plant sprouts too early, it easily damaged by late frosts.

Wild Cucumber has been cultivated as a climber for verandas, fences and garden gateways. However, be careful planting

it as it can become very abundant and spread to neighbouring locations. You can buy its seeds from online nurseries; at one site 50 seeds cost 15 dollars. Native Americans used Wild Cucumber for making remedies for chills and fevers, kidney problems and rheumatism. A root decoction or infusion was taken as a bitter tonic for the stomach, and a poultice of crushed root was applied for a headache. A bitter tea made from the roots of this plant was used to relieve pain (analgesic) and as a love potion. The fruit, both fresh and old, is sometimes used in flower arrangements. The seeds with their distinctive patterns have been used as beads in making necklaces.

In researching for this article I was first surprised to learn that Wild Cucumber is native to North America as I had thought it was an invasive species introduced from Europe. Secondly, this is a species that is considered an invasive species in much of Europe. It was introduced in the late 19th and early 20th century as an ornamental and medicinal plant and planted in several Botanical gardens from which it escaped around 1906.

Apparently its fruits have been used by children as ammunition for cucumber ball fights. Sounds like fun and I think this would be a much better choice than horse chestnuts which were used in the neighbourhood where I grew up. Chestnuts really hurt.



Photo 5 - Seed
Photo by G. Bishop



Photo 6 - Seed
Photo by G. Bishop

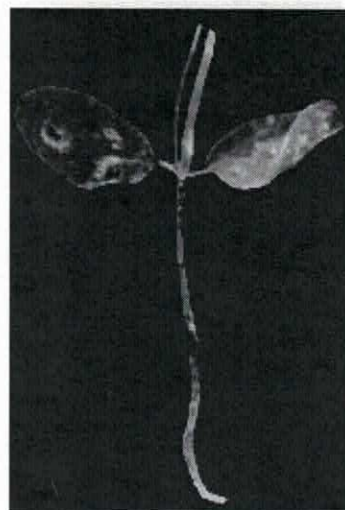


Photo 8 - Primary leaves, found in spring
New Brunswick Museum specimen
Photo by G. Bishop

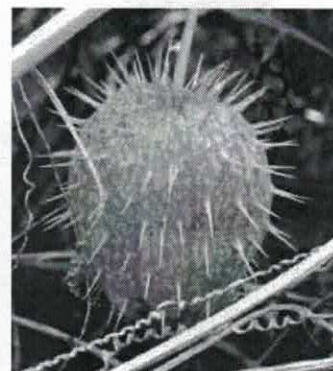


Photo 4 - Spiny fruit
Photo by G. Bishop



Photo 7 - Wild Cucumber's five-lobed leaf
Photo by G. Bishop

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NBM specimen # 21202, 1979. Collected by J. Forthythe.

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Mike Lushington
Dalhousie

The Time of the Larch

It is called Hackmatack, Eastern Larch, Tamarack, Juniper, and *Larix laricina* to botanists. To me, it is simply Larch. It is one of the unprepossessing trees of our forests; if people happen to notice it at all, it is to dismiss it as straggly, gaunt, and even ugly—hardly worth much attention, let alone poems, paintings, or photographs in praise of the larch. Very few would consider it with Sugar Maples, White Pines, White Spruce, or American Elms as an iconic tree of our landscape. The larch hardly rates attention except for one brief time in late fall when, for a few short weeks; it can dominate the landscape.

The autumn colour show begins in September (with a few precocious forerunners—usually Red Maples—even in late August), and by early October—at least up here in the north country—the maples and wild cherries are in their spectacular, scarlet best. Their support cast—the birches and aspens—contribute to the panorama with slashes of gold and amber. Then comes the wind and rain, and for a brief while, oaks and beeches take over, slowing down expectations and subduing the moods of the landscape. Another heavy rain, a strong wind and the show seems to be over. Then, one morning late in October, on a morning of fitful sunshine and brisk breezes after the chilly night, one happens to be driving by a spruce bog just as the larches bestir themselves and burst into a warm, rust-gold glow that is every bit as stunning, if not as widespread, as the earlier show of the big hardwoods.

There is a stretch of Route 8 between Bathurst and Miramichi that should become a tourists' destination for the final two weeks of October and into early November—the annual Larch Celebration, I might call it. This is a land of Black Spruce, spindly firs and White Spruce, of White Birch and endless clumps of willow, blueberry, and laurel—and of stands of larch that can stretch for hundreds of meters along the roadway. Usually, it lurks in the background, huddling obscurely in and around the other conifers, until, suddenly (as it would seem), it is called upon to perform. The understudy steps in to take on the lead role. In that short period in late fall, the drive along this sometimes desolate road takes on a whole new dimension—one, in its own way, as deserving of poetry, paintings, and photographs as are the great hardwoods. And then, it is back to the shadows. For the rest of the fall and throughout the winter, it will appear—if it is noticed at all—as a dead spruce; in spring it will resume its humble Cinderella garb and patiently bide its time. Fame is ephemeral in the forest; the Larch accepts this, but, when called upon to perform, it does so, with quiet beauty and grace.

On the Use of Mineral or Divining Rods in New Brunswick

W.F. Ganong

The use of divining rods in the search for hidden water, concealed mineral beds or buried treasures, is extremely ancient and widespread. The belief in their efficiency is very prevalent in New Brunswick, where they are generally known as "mineral-rods," and used not so much in seeking water (which is usually abundant enough in this favored province) as for locating suspected ore-beds or the treasure supposed to have been buried by Captain Kidd, the Acadian French or others. Odd or conspicuous places everywhere around the coast and on the lower courses of the rivers almost invariably show holes dug by credulous treasure-seekers, most of whom are known to have used the mineral-rod in their preliminary explorations. The subject has been investigated more or less thoroughly a number of times, and as a result, most scientific men consider, I believe, that there is no physical connection whatever between the performance of a mineral rod in the hands of an expert and the presence of minerals or water, but that the observed phenomena of movements of the rods, are all explicable upon known psychological principles of suggestion, association, etc. The expert users of the rods (for not all people are the proper kind of "medium,") are supposed to be those who combine great credulity with a power of subconscious observation and shrewdness in guessing probable localities, and this mental state reacts unconsciously upon the physical being, causing the rod to be turned downward in probable places. Hence the mineral-rods bend at

certain places not at all from external (physical or objective) but entirely from internal (mental or subjective) causes. A somewhat different explanation, however, has recently been given, at least for the finding of water, by an English investigator, W.F. Barrett. He considers it possible that the user of the rod may hypnotize himself by the concentration of attention upon the point of the rod, and in that state become susceptible to influences from without to which others, and he himself ordinarily, are entirely insensitive, and that there may be some still unknown physical connection between the presence of water and the mental state of the user of the rod.

The origin of the belief in divining rods has been traced by Fiske in his "Myths and Myth-makers." Other important literature upon the subject may be found as follows: *Nature*, October, 1897, page 568, November, Page 79; January, 1898, page 221; November, 1899, page 1. There is also a short article of interest in the *St. John Globe* for May, 15, 1900, and another in the same paper, January 2, 1901. Most important of all are Barrett's two monographs in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1897 and 1900.

From our Past

Selected by
Mary Sollows
Saint John



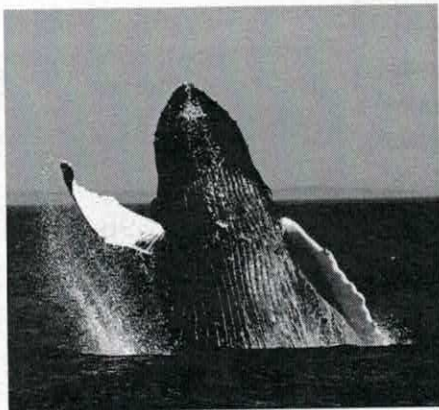
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(CONTRIBUTION FROM THE FREDERICTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.)
NOTES ON THE NATURAL HISTORY AND PHYSIOGRAPHY OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

Bay of Fundy Surprises

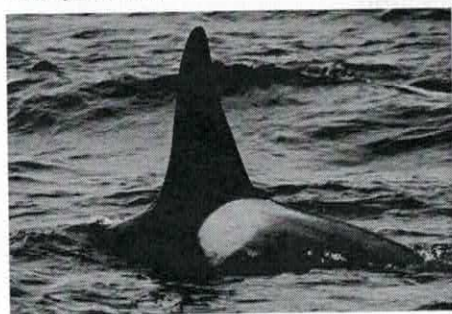
Laurie Murison
Grand Manan

Note: Videos of many of these sightings can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/Fundywhale-guy>



Humpback whale breaching off White Head Island
Photo by L. Murison

Male Killer whale, seen off Nova Scotia
Photo by S. Barnaby



I always look forward to the summer and all that it brings in my marine encounters as a whale watch naturalist. The summer started with above normal temperatures and foggy conditions on the Bay, although not as foggy as some summers.

With sightings of right whales in June and many of the 19 right whale calves recorded on the calving grounds from North Carolina to Florida expected with their mothers, it looked like a good year. As many as 100 to 200 individual right

whales come into the Bay over a season, identified by the unique rough patches on their heads. However, this summer saw few right whales, no doubt related to a lack of large patches of the tiny zooplankton these whales prefer to eat. Unfortunately two dead right whales were found, one in early July, well south of Grand Manan and another washed ashore on Long Island, NS, in August. Both were suspected vessel collisions

with propeller cuts observed on the first and broken bones discovered on the second. Right whale carcasses can drift long distances so the location where the whales died is not known.

Humpbacks, on the other hand, were commonly seen off White Head Island throughout the summer and only late in the season off the Wolves. Humpbacks are individually recognizable by the unique jagged trailing edge and colour patterns on the underside of their tails. Often, 150 to 200 individuals are seen through the summer and fall. Of course, they are not all seen at once as they filter in and out of

the Bay. Most years the humpbacks are on the Nova Scotia side, or below Ganong Rock in an area called the Prong, or on the Grand Manan Banks. To see 80 different humpbacks higher in the Bay was a treat. Several mothers and their calves were in this number. Humpbacks have their calves in the winter in the Caribbean or the Dominican Republic and the calves stay with their mothers for about one year.

Last summer, fin or finback whales were consistently found off White Head Island on Clarks Ground and off Old Proprietary Shoal. This summer, the numbers were much smaller. They were sometimes found at the Long Eddy rip and along the ferry route but never in large numbers. Ten to twelve fin whales were consistently seen in the Head Harbour to Blacks Harbour area, often lunging to the surface with their mouths open, eating krill and brit. A few mothers and their new calves were also seen. It is thought that fin whales have their calves off the Carolinas but no concentrated calving areas have been found.

Minke whales were cruising around the Bay as usual. Two were temporarily trapped in herring weirs off Grand Manan but both swam out. A recently dead minke whale washed ashore on Machias Seal Island September 14. There was some bruising visible but a necropsy was not possible to determine cause of death.

Harbour porpoises were in abundance in certain areas but not in large numbers close to shore. This situation prevented them blundering into herring weirs. Consequently, few needed to be released. Porpoises closely follow herring schools

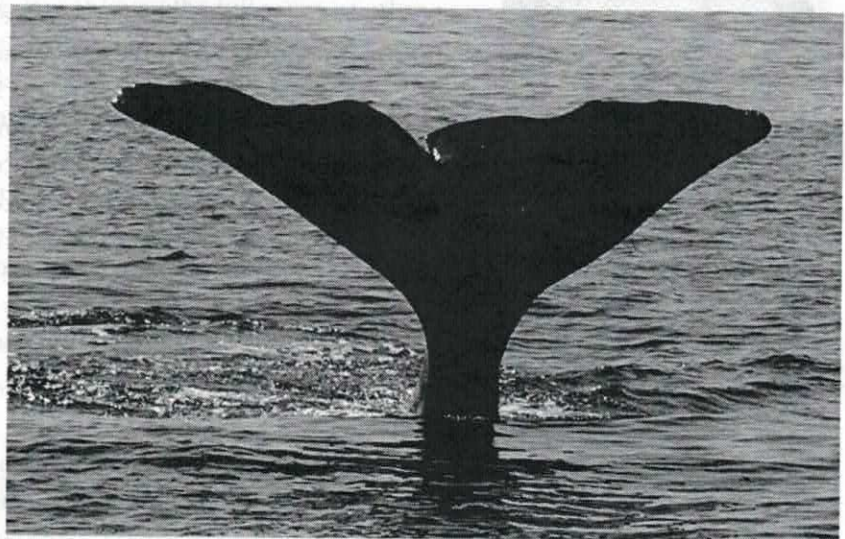
and when the herring are along the shore so are the porpoises.

The ultimate surprise this summer was the presence of sperm whales. Only a couple of records exist since 1980 for the Bay of Fundy and these were of a single whale seen only once. From the beginning of August until late September, at least seven different sperm whales were seen in the Grand Manan Basin and off Nova Scotia. Sperm whales can be identified by the trailing edge of their tail flukes. Although everyone thinks of sperm whales battling giant squid, most of their diet is small squid and fish. Because the Bay of Fundy is shallow for sperm whales they are not expected here and particularly not for two months, even though there are often schools of squid, including some attracted to the lights at the wharves at night. Sperm whale males are much larger than the females and their pods are segregated into females and their young, and bachelor pods.

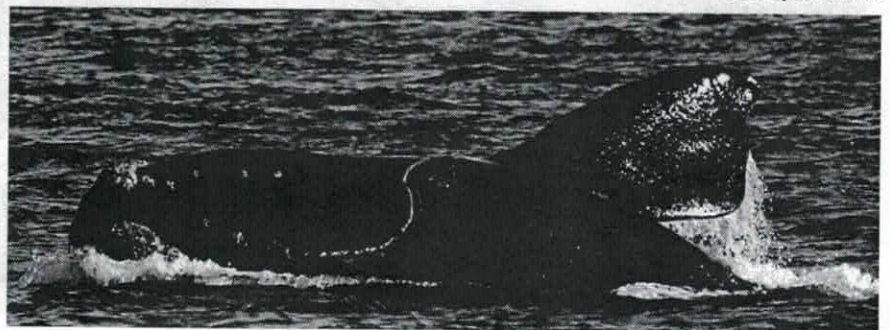
Pilot whales, another squid eater, were seen in the Bay in September. They are very social whales and will intermingle with other species. This was the case on September 18 when researchers from the GM Whale & Seabird Research Station found pilot whales, white-beaked dolphins, white-sided dolphins and a humpback whale all in one group. That particular weekend ten species of whales were seen in the Bay: humpback, fin, right, minke, pilot, killer, and sperm whales, white-sided and white-beaked dolphins, and harbour porpoises. The killer whale sighting was a lone male, presumably the same one that has been seen off and on for the last four or five summers. Separated from his pod, he is sometimes seen swimming with dolphins as was the case with this sighting off Nova Scotia. An eleventh species, a

beluga whale has been seen in the upper reaches of the Bay for the last three years, visiting boats and coves on both the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia sides of the upper Bay. It is not known where this whale was on this particular weekend, however.

All in all a very interesting summer.



Sperm whale tale
Photo by L. Murison



Right whale calf
Photo by L. Murison

Lewnanny Richardson
Rivière à la Truite

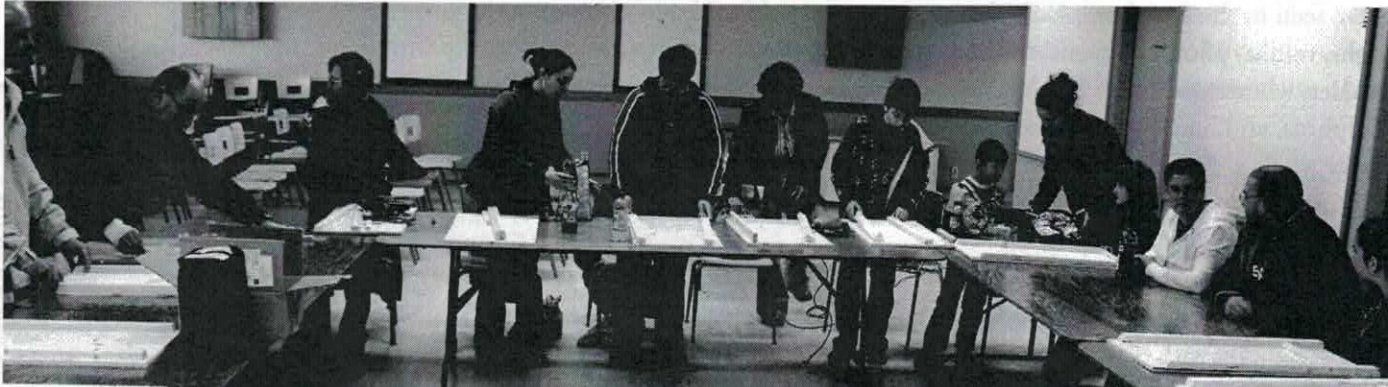


Dortoir pour les chauves-souris
Photo par L. Richardson



Participants à l'atelier
Photo par L. Richardson

Atelier de construction de dortoir pour les chauves-souris
Photo par L. Richardson



Atelier : dortoir pour les chauves-souris

En 2010, Nature NB a mis sur pied une série d'ateliers sur la nature dans le cadre de son programme Espèces en Péril. Un de ces thèmes touchait les chauves-souris. L'atelier en question consistait à fabriquer un dortoir pour les chauves-souris que les participants pouvaient ensuite installer près de leur propriété. En tout, deux ateliers sur les chauves-souris ont eu lieu au Nouveau-Brunswick, dont un à Gagetown durant le festival de la Nature de Nature NB et un second dans la Péninsule acadienne le 9 octobre dernier. Les deux ateliers se sont déroulés à la perfection. La première

partie a été assurée par les deux employés biologistes de Nature NB - Espèces en Péril, qui ont préparé le matériel nécessaire à la réalisation de l'atelier. Par la suite, une présentation interactive sur les chauves-souris faisait office de première partie de l'atelier pour ensuite amener les participants à concevoir eux-mêmes leur dortoir. Une fois les matériaux en mains, les participants n'avaient qu'à suivre les instructions données oralement au fur et à mesure. Une

fois montées, les cabanes n'avaient plus qu'à être peintes. Tous les participants ont adoré leur expérience.

En tout, une quarantaine de dortoirs ont été confectionnés durant les ateliers. Nature NB aimerait continuer dans cette voie et espère tenir d'autres ateliers de ce genre en abordant d'autres sujets. Si vous êtes intéressé(e) à participer ou si vous avez un groupe de naturalistes intéressé à recevoir un tel atelier dans votre région, n'hésitez pas à contacter Nature NB pour des détails sur la faisabilité.

Un gros merci au Fonds de fiducie de la faune pour son soutien à cette initiative.

Un gros merci aux participants !

Reptiles and Amphibians of New Brunswick

Gregor Jongsma
Fredericton

Reptiles and amphibians (collectively known as herpetofauna) in New Brunswick and around the world are often vilified or else overlooked creatures... Or so I was lead to believe. Following the NatureNB listserv or flipping through most issues of this magazine would lead most people to conclude that naturalists in New Brunswick are interested in birds or plants alone. Since moving to New Brunswick, less than one year ago, I've had to reverse that opinion.

Since April, I was afforded the opportunity to lead more than 200 interested (and always interesting) New Brunswickers on reptile and amphibian walks around Fredericton. People were amazed by what existed right in their own backyards. More recently, on October 23, I was further impressed when 27 people from around the province (and beyond) flocked to Fredericton for a 5 hour workshop on the herpetofauna of New Brunswick. The workshop originally aimed to cover an array of topics—a history of herpetology in the province, global and local threats, population trends and how to reduce our impact. Unfortunately, we were only able cover how to identify all the species in the province. Of course, with fewer questions, stories and theories, there might have been more time but then we could have hardly called it a celebration of these amazing creatures.

So although I know not everybody overlooks amphibians or vilifies reptiles in New Brunswick, there may still be some of you that are unconvinced about just how awesome reptiles and amphibians really are. No, they are not the most diverse

groups of organisms in the province and, yes, there is little to no chance of unexpected vagrants (can you imagine!); Fortunately,, there is still much to discover and excitement to be had over herps in New Brunswick. For example, the elusive four-toed salamander was only discovered in New Brunswick in 1983. It is known only from a single locality; yet appropriate habitat is wide spread in the province. We do not know the full range of other species like the Grey Tree Frog or Dusky Salamander. There may well be Northern Water Snakes in New Brunswick that still go undetected. Such basic information as presence of a species is fundamental to conservation. It is up to us to foster a better understanding of the inhabitants all around us, through exploration and sharing.

Visit NatureNB.ca for more information about future workshops!

*In the end we will
conserve only what
we love, we will
love only what we
understand, and will
understand only what
we are taught.*

~ Baba Dioum



American Toad
Photo by R. Chiasson



Northern Leopard Frog
Photo by R. Chiasson



Garter Snake
Photo by R. Chiasson

Marc-André Villard,
Moncton;
Ronald G. Arsenault,
Memramcook

Giving Nature a Voice

New Brunswickers frequently witness habitat destruction. Living in a province where natural resource extraction is still a major economic activity, NB naturalists are “front-row and center” when it comes to witnessing large-scale clearcutting, open pit mining, speeding ATVs on dunes and beaches, or, like Dwayne Biggar observed last spring, people hosing down Cliff Swallow nests that were glued to their house. As naturalists, we are especially sensitive to the effects that these activities have on particular species or ecosystems we cherish.

Habitat alteration or direct harm to animals or plants can result from perfectly legal activities such as forest harvesting, mining or hunting (at the right time and in the right place!). Others clearly are not. In the case of the swallow nests, our fellow naturalist quickly called the RCMP but the officer who came to the scene was unaware of the Migratory Bird Convention Act, which prohibits anyone from molesting birds or their nests. Brian Dalzell, another active naturalist, quickly responded to the message. His perspective on the Cliff Swallow nest destruction (posted on the NatureNB listserv on 4 June 2010) is interesting: “what is needed here is [a better understanding of the issues] on the part of the homeowners. A flyer should be circulated to all residents informing them of the presence of the swallows, the desirability of having them around, and the illegality of removing their

nests during the nesting season. The best thing now would be to put up with them for this season, then erect some form of discouragement (flashing or strips of plastic) to encourage them to go elsewhere. There are lots of suitable spots nearby”. Unfortunately, in this case, the owner pursued his/her vendetta and destroyed the remaining nests over that week-end.

As this example illustrates, the listserv can quickly draw the attention of fellow naturalists when illegal actions are witnessed. Naturalists are keen observers. If they knew who to contact, they could represent a formidable surveillance network. Therefore, we believe members should know who to call when immediate action is required from the police or other government body mandated with enforcing legislation enacted to protect wildlife and its habitat. In the table below, we have listed various illegal activities along with the government agency responsible for enforcing the applicable legislation.

Readers should note that the above is a list of violations we consider most likely to be encountered by naturalists. It is not an exhaustive list of all possible infractions. A specific situation encountered may not “fit” neatly within one category outlined above, while others will be relevant to more than one enforcement body. For example, the illegal harvesting of timber along a watercourse should be communicated to the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Naturalists should keep in mind that the legal system does not move fast, that regulatory bodies have limits to their authority and often have an insufficient budget to assume all responsibilities under their mandate. Thus, they have to prioritize the issues that they will address.

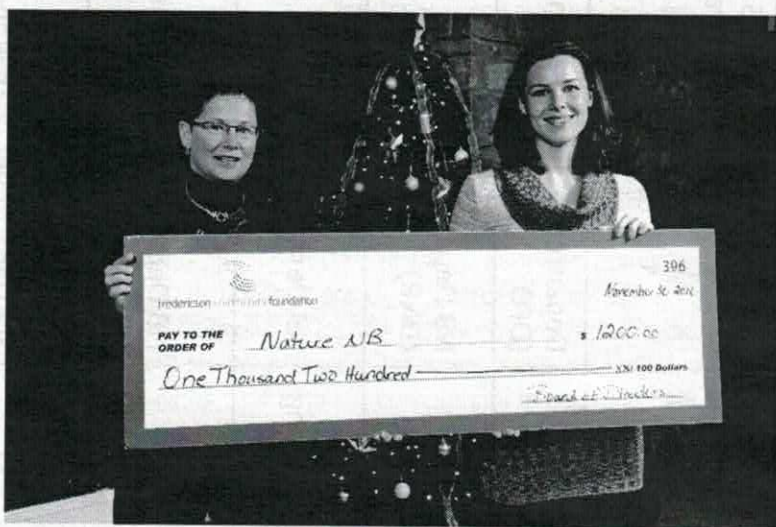
We encourage naturalists to report any illegal activity encountered to the appropriate enforcement body. While it is frustrating when one reports a violation only to see no apparent resultant action, it is still helpful for these violations to be reported as it would help paint a more accurate picture of what is actually taking place in our environment. It may also raise awareness of the situation and could have a positive impact on the budget of the corresponding regulatory agencies. In

addition, enforcement bodies often have a suite of actions available to them, in addition to prosecution. Thus, in some cases, it is possible that enforcement action has been taken. We may simply not be aware of it.

Throughout the world, naturalists continue to play a key role in ensuring that governing bodies adopt relevant policies to protect the environment. Naturalists are also at the forefront of the action when it comes to reporting violations. Collectively, we can make sure that such violations do not go unreported and that the public gains a greater awareness in the process. It is an easily neglected task but it is also one of the most important ones we can do!

To whom can you report illegal habitat destruction?

Please see the following page for a table of government agencies and contact information



Afton Conneely, Interim Executive Director of Nature NB, receives a grant on behalf of Nature NB from the Fredericton Community Foundation on November 29th. (Left: Fredericton Community Foundation Director Pam Clark; Right: Afton Conneely)

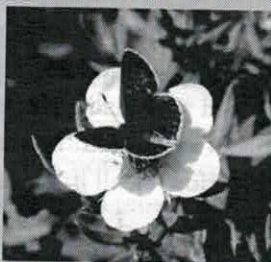
Afton Conneely, directrice par intérim de Nature NB, reçoit un don de la fondation communautaire de Fredericton au nom de Nature NB le 29 novembre. (Gauche : Pam Clark, directrice de la fondation communautaire de Fredericton; droite : Afton Conneely)

Giving Nature a Voice: Contact information

Human action	Relevant government agency	Contact
Direct harm to birds listed under the Migratory Bird Convention Act	Canadian Wildlife Service	Canadian Wildlife Service, Sackville 506-364-5013
Direct harm to a bird of prey	NB Department of Natural Resources	NB Department of Natural Resources Hugh John Flemming Forestry Center Fredericton 506-453-2440
Use of an All-terrain Vehicle (ATV) on public land, outside of a designated area	NB Department of Public Safety (Off-road Vehicle Enforcement Program)	Off-Road Vehicle Enforcement 326 Dalton Avenue Miramichi New Brunswick E1V 3N9 Toll free: 1-877-449-2244 Reception: 1-506-624-2124
Disturbance of riparian zone (within 15 m of water level)	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)	DFO, Gulf Region, Moncton 506-851-6227
Illegal timber harvesting	NB Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	DNR, Hugh John Flemming Forestry Center, Fredericton 506-453-2440
Illegal hunting/fishing/trapping	NB Department of Natural Resources	DNR, Hugh John Flemming Forestry Center, Fredericton 506-453-2440
Illegal dumping of garbage	NB Department of Environment	Marysville Place 20 McGloin St Fredericton 506-453-2690
Illegal dumping of contaminants in water courses	NB Department of Environment	Marysville Place 20 McGloin St Fredericton 506-453-2690

Maritimes Butterfly Atlas Roundup

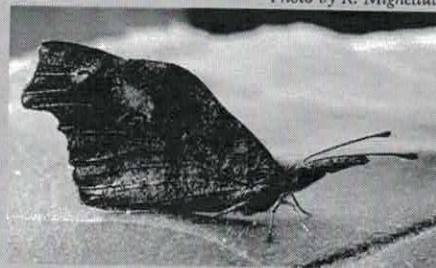
Do you have butterfly photos or specimens from this past season? If so, you are encouraged to submit these to the Maritimes Butterfly Atlas. The Atlas is an Environment Canada sponsored citizen science project aimed at assessing the conservation status of all butterfly species in the Maritimes. The past spring, summer and fall was the first full season of the Atlas, and to date I have received more than 1,000 photographs and specimens from more than 60 volunteers. Highlights include first provincial records of Dorcas Copper in Nova Scotia and American Snout in New Brunswick. As data comes in, there will certainly be many more highlights. Any photos or specimens accompanied by information about the location and date of observation would be appreciated. For more information on the Atlas contact John Klymko of the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre (jklymko@mta.ca) or visit www.accdc.com/butterflyatlas.html.



Dorcas Copper
Photo by R. Mazerolle

Atlas des Papillons des Maritimes : photos et spécimens demandés

Avez-vous des photos ou des spécimens de papillons récoltés durant la saison 2010? Si c'est le cas, vous êtes invités à les soumettre à l'Atlas des Papillons des Maritimes. L'Atlas est un projet financé par Environnement Canada visant à évaluer, avec l'aide de citoyens intéressés, le statut de toutes les espèces de papillons dans les Maritimes. Le printemps, l'été et l'automne 2010 ont représenté collectivement la première année de collecte de données pour l'Atlas. Jusqu'à date nous avons reçu plus de 1000 photos et spécimens provenant de plus de 60 participants. Parmi les points saillants de cette année figurent les premières documentations du Cuivré de la Potentille en Nouvelle-Écosse et du Papillon long-palpes au Nouveau-Brunswick. La réception graduelle de nouvelles données et de photos/spécimens révélera sûrement d'autres belles découvertes. Tout spécimen et toutes photos accompagnés d'information comprenant le lieu et la date d'observation seraient appréciés. Pour plus d'information au sujet de l'Atlas, contactez John Klymko du Centre de données sur la conservation du Canada Atlantique (jklymko@mta.ca) ou visitez le site web www.accdc.com/butterflyatlas.html.



American Snout
Photo by R. Migneault

Book Review
Glenda Turner
Fredericton

Sanctuary

The Story of Naturalist
Mary Majka

by Deborah Carr

Gooselane,
Fredericton, NB, 2010.
248 pages.

Sanctuary: The Story of Naturalist Mary Majka

by Deborah Carr

Mary and Mike Majka came to Canada in 1951 as Polish nationals, displaced by World War II. They lived ten years in Ontario, where their two sons were born. Mary and Mike became Canadian citizens, and Mike earned his license in practice pathology. But at the end of the decade, the family was still looking for "sanctuary." In 1961, a job offer to Mike brought them to Moncton, New Brunswick, where they found their sanctuary, settling into a cottage on Caledonia Mountain and into a rural community. Mary, in the words of her biographer Deborah Carr, "found that sacred place of acceptance and refuge, both in the world and within the soul."

Mary "finally felt ... able to be herself, to reclaim her identity and exercise all the joys of living that she had enjoyed during her childhood in Poland." On Caledonia Mountain, she was able to deal with personal sorrow and loss and make "a healing connection to nature."

Fifty years later, the name Mary Majka is inextricably linked with New Brunswick and, in particular, with the Fundy region of Albert County. "Naturalist, educator, writer and community activist," writes Harry Thurston, "Mary Majka has done more to preserve the natural and cultural legacy of the Bay of Fundy than anyone in our time." That work earned her a national reputation as an environmentalist and brought her a host of awards and honors, including the Order of Canada in 2007.

In the preface to her book, Deborah Carr notes that the story of Mary Majka,

from Polish childhood to venerated New Brunswick naturalist, is "something larger than a simple recording of events, dramatic as they were" Carr does an excellent job of presenting her subject sympathetically and honestly, bringing into focus the "kaleidoscope" of Mary's character and personality while recording the details of a life lived "at the sharp edge of emotion, in all its extremes."

Carr prefaces each chapter with a quotation gleaned from her interviews. She then opens with an episode from these regular meetings at the Majkas' current home on Mary's Point. This is a very effective framework for the development of the story, providing insights into Mary's character as well as a contemporary look into the family circle. The family group includes David Christie who joined the Majka household in 1965 and through the years became not only family but also Mary's closest collaborator. The first four chapters detail Mary's childhood in Poland, her displacement in World War II, her student years, marriage and in 1951, immigration to Canada. Transition years in Ontario take up chapter five and in chapter six, Mary and family find their sanctuary in New Brunswick. The remaining chapters tell the story of Mary's life in New Brunswick and her many conservation projects.

For example, within months of settling in New Brunswick, the Majkas founded the Moncton Nature Club. Mary then began her determined campaign to change wildlife legislation to include protection for birds of prey. In 1972, she

and David Christie were prime movers in uniting nature clubs in Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton into a federation of naturalists~ now known as Nature NB- with David serving as first president. Mary subsequently headed the federation. She and David worked to expand the naturalist network with new nature clubs in communities such as Chignecto, Miramichi and Kennebecasis.

"Within a decade of arriving in the province," Carr notes, "Mary emerged as a visionary and a pioneer of New Brunswick's fledgling environmental movement. She became a spokesperson for nature, advocating for rare orchids and gray tree frogs. She initiated projects that led to the protection of ecologically sensitive habitats. She hosted a children's television show ... , taught outdoor education and started the first nature centre for children in a Canadian national park. She was featured in national newspaper and magazine articles, books and documentaries that heralded her heritage restoration and wildlife rehabilitation activities."

Perhaps the best known of many projects associated with Mary Majka is Canada's first designated Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve at Mary's Point, which opened in 1987. Carr provides a detailed account of the role Mary, David and others played over a period of many years to achieve a sanctuary for migrating shorebirds on these critically important feeding grounds. The story of the Mary's Point reserve also serves to illustrate what Carr sees as the essential Mary, a woman who "knew only too well how survival depended on sanctuary."

This insight is fundamental to the story Carr tells of Mary as wife, mother, homemaker, friend, environmentalist, and naturalist. The passion to find sanctuary for herself and her family, and to provide it for others, emerges from the narrative as a fundamental motivator in her life. "I feel responsible to take care of things," she told Carr. Her home became a sanctuary for injured and orphaned wildlife and over the years she nurtured many young people. "More than thirty youngsters shared in our family life for long or short durations," Mary wrote to a friend when she received the Order of Canada. It is "not the accolades of others ... that is the greatest reward Today when one of these comes to me to say 'you were my guiding light,' who needs an Order?"

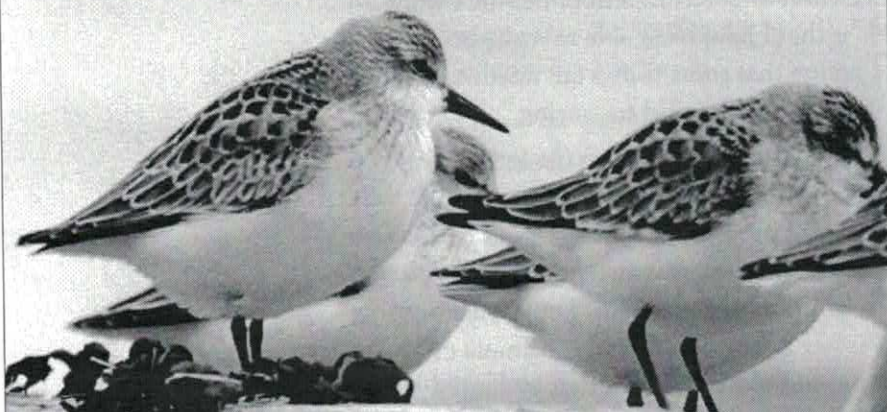
"I always felt I had been given a mission," Mary told Carr, "and while I never felt a distinct vocation, the great theme in my life has been to love and to serve". Her own modest assessment of her life's work "is that I have been able to make people realize that some things are worth saving and protecting and treasuring."

At the conclusion of her book; Deborah Carr wonders "what will happen to Mary's projects, once she is gone." Carr is certain she knows what makes Mary significant for us: "This then, I believe, is her legacy. Through the example of her life, she has shown that by simply following our true nature, the nugget of passion that resides in each heart, we change our world. It doesn't have to be large or grandiose; it just needs to be true."

Though Mary Majka "has been shaped by many places, she belongs ... at Mary's

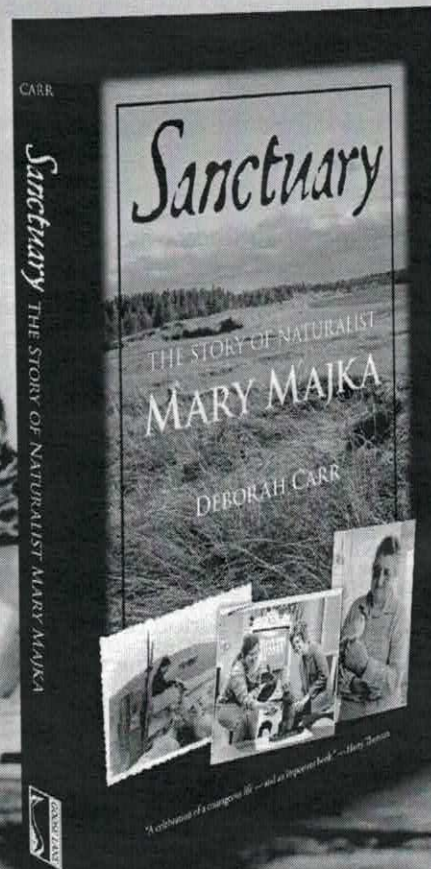
Point," Carr writes. Chance brought the Majkas to New Brunswick and circumstances allowed them to make a good life here. Carr gives us a portrait of an indomitable woman who likely would have found a way to survive and even bloom wherever she was planted. It is our good fortune that she took root in New Brunswick.

*"You have to live in nature
to experience it."*
— MARY MAJKA



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Nature News: Birds

August 1 - October 31, 2010

Pierrette Mercier
St. Léandre, Qc

Since I started doing this column about six years ago, this report contains the most postings that I have ever received. People are still getting out there and seeing the rarities. There have also been many comments on the large number of migrants—it seems to have been a good breeding year for the birds.

A CORY'S SHEARWATER (Puffin cendré) was observed off White Head Island on Aug 21 (Laurie Murison).

An AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (Pélican blanc d'Amérique) was at Malbaie Nord on August 3 (Steeve Miousse). It was still present on August 28.

Stu Tingley witnessed migrating GREAT BLUE HERONS (Grand Héon) over Petit-Cap on Oct 14, counting at least 90 birds over a period of an hour. A GREAT EGRET (Grande Aigrette) was at the Roherty Marsh in Belledune on September 6 (Roger Guitard), another was at the marsh between Inkerman and Four-Road on Sept 13 (Steeve Miousse), and one was reported on the Keswick Flats on Oct 21 (fide Bev Schneider). Dan Mazerolle saw either a GREAT or SNOWY EGRET (Aigrette neigeuse) flying by at Fundy National Park on Oct 16. Todd Watts reported two SNOWY EGRETS (Aigrette neigeuse) at Castalia marsh on Oct 12. A CATTLE EGRET (Héron garde-boeufs) was in Hebron on Oct 24 (George Sinclair) and three were observed in Upper Coverdale on Oct 25 (Connie Colpitts). Brian Dalzell counted 41 BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS (Bihoreau gris) at Castalia

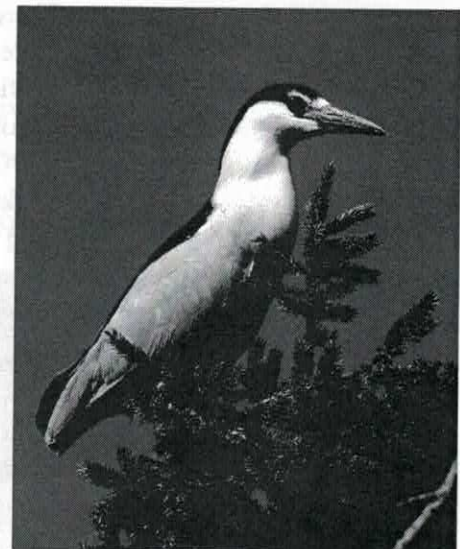
Marsh on Aug 24 and Roger Burrows saw 49 on Aug 30, a record for this area.

Stu Tingley found a PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (Oie à bec court) among a flock of CANADA GEESE (Bernache du Canada) in Cormierville on Oct 30. A GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (Oie rieuse) was reported in Fairisle near Neguac on Oct 2 (RéGINE Robichaud), Todd Watts also spotted three over Greenlaw Mountain on Oct 14, and one was in Tower Hill on Oct 28 (Ron and Arlene McGuire). There were 19 BRANTS (Bernache cravant) on White Head on Oct 20 (Roger Burrows). Roger Burrows observed what looked like a female NORTHERN PINTAIL X AMERICAN WIGEON hybrid (Canard pilet x Canard d'Amérique hybride) with the shape and speculum of the Pintail and the head shape, bill, and plumage of the Wigeon at the GM Bird Sanctuary on Aug 23. A EURASIAN WIGEON (Canard siffleur) was at Eel River Bar on Oct 9 (Irene Doyle), and another was at the Hampton lagoon on Oct 22 (Joanne Savage). Irene also spotted what looked like a GARGANEY (Sarcelle d'été) at the Atholville lagoon on Oct 11 but was unable to confirm it.

Another good year for REDHEADS (Fulligule à tête rouge): one was at Eel River Bar on Oct 9, three at the Atholville lagoon on Oct 11 (Irene Doyle), one at Cap Brûlé Lagoon on Oct 9 (Rose-Alma Mallet, the Belliveaus), and more were reported.



American White Pelican
Photo by S. Miousse



Black-Crowned Night Heron
Photo by S. Miousse



Gyrfalcon
Photo by S. Miousse

Todd Watts sent regular reports from the Greenlaw Mountain Hawk Watch. He mentions that numbers were up from last year. Migration peaked around Sept 16 with 1067 birds counted on that day. Highlights were COOPER'S HAWKS (Épervier de Cooper) and RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS (Buse à epaulettes). Todd also had a Cooper's at Kerrs Ridge on Sept 29, and Roger Burrows saw two on White Head Island on Oct 20. The first report of a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK (Buse pattue) was on Oct 8 in Sackville (Brian Dalzell).

A brown morph juvenile GYRFALCON (Faucon gerfaut) was on Shore Road, GMI on Oct 5 (Roger Burrows).

Two WILD TURKEYS (Dindon sauvage) were seen on McLeod Hill Road near Fredericton on Aug 18 (Ron Wilson).

There was a report of a CLAPPER RAIL (Râle gris) at Castalia Marsh on Oct 11 (fide Durlan Ingersoll). Hank and Caroline Scarth found a COMMON MOORHEN (Gallinule poule-d'eau) at Wilkin's Field in Fredericton North on Aug 5. An AMERICAN COOT (Foulque d'Amérique) was at the Lancaster Lagoon on Oct 18 (Bev Schneider).

The SANDHILL CRANE (Grue du Canada) in Barachois was still present on Sept 28 (Yolande LeBlanc). Ian Cameron saw a Sandhill at the Cap Brulé lagoon on Oct 6, which might have been the same bird. Two more Sandhills were in the Havelock area on Oct 5 (Jim Brown) and one was reported in Scotch Settlement on Oct 25 (Jim Johnson).

Shorebird migration seems to have peaked around the second week of August with over 100,000 birds present on the mudflats at Mary's Point on Aug 8 (fide David Christie). On Aug 11 there were 30,000 birds at Johnson's Mills (fide NMIL), and on Aug 12 there were over 40,000 birds at Bray and Big Bar Beaches near Cape Enrage (David Christie).

Greg Jongsma reported 10 PIPING PLOVERS (Pluvier siffleur) at Bocabec on Oct 13. There was a possible COMMON RINGED PLOVER (Pluvier Grand-gravelot) on Thoroughfare Road, GMI on Oct 21 (Roger Burrows).

Steeve Miousse and others spotted a MARBELED GODWIT (Barge marbrée) at Malbaie Sud on Aug 14. There was a RUDDY TURNSTONE (Tournepierre à collier) in St-Basile, Madawaska County on Sept 3, which is an unusual sighting for this area. Peter Vichery reports a WESTERN SANDPIPER (Bécasseau d'Alaska) at Castalia marsh on Sept 13. Another was at Grand Harbour on Oct 5 (Roger Burrows). There was a possible LITTLE STINT (Bécasseau minute) on White Head Island on Aug 24 (Roger Burrows). A BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (Bécasseaux de Baird) was at Castalia marsh on Aug 11 (Roger Burrows), and many more were reported. A STILT SANDPIPER (Bécasseau à échasses) was at Saints Rest Marsh on Aug 28 (Gilles Belliveau), and four more were at the Riverview Marsh on Sept 4 (Roger Leblanc). LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER was at the Dune de Maisonnnette on Aug 13 (Roger Guitard). Irene Doyle reports a WILSON'S PHALAROPE (Phalarope de Wilson) at the Atholville lagoon on Sept 10.



South Polar Skua
Photo by L. Murison

Stu Tingley identified three POMARINE JAEGERS (Labbe pomarin) over the Tantramar marshes on Oct 25. A SOUTH POLAR SKUA (Labbe de McCormick) was observed on the Bay of Fundy on Aug 5 (Laurie Murison), Jim Wilson is quite sure of one on Aug 30, and one was identified from the GMI ferry on Oct 26 (Roger Burrows). After the passing of Hurricane Earl on Sept 5, Brian Dalzell and Alain Clavette counted a total of 10 LAUGHING GULLS (Mouette atricille) at different areas on GMI. More were reported. A LITTLE GULL (Mouette pygmée) was at Cap Bimêt on Aug 1 (Norm, Gisèle and Gilles Belliveau), and more were reported. Several LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS (Goëland brun) were reported. Tracey Dean spotted a SABINE'S GULL (Mouette de Sabine) off GMI on Sept 19. Roger Leblanc reports a CASPIAN TERN (Sterne caspienne) near Cassie Cape on Sept 2, and more were reported. A FORSTER'S TERN (Sterne de Forster) was at the Head Harbour Passage on Sept 8 (Peter Vickery), another was at Castalia marsh on Sept 14 (Durlan Ingersoll), and one was at Eel River Bar on Sept 20 (Robert Doiron). A BLACK SKIMMER (Bec-en-ciseaux noir) was first reported at Castalia Marsh on Sept 13 (Rod Gardener). Three more were in Lorneville on Sept 18 (Norm Belliveau), and one at Seal Cove on Oct 11 (fide Durlan Ingersoll).

A WHITE-WINGED DOVE (Tourterelle à ailes blanches) was observed on MSI on Aug 7 (Ralph Eldridge).

Roger Burrows saw a BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO (Coulicou à bec noir) at Grand Harbour on Oct 14. The first report of a YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (Coulicou à bec jaune) was on Sept 27 at Ox Head (Roger Burrows). Jim Wilson

also spotted one at Darlings Island on Sept 28. Others were reported.

Gabriel Gallant thought he heard a LONG-EARED OWL (Hibou moyen-duc) at Bouctouche Cove on Oct 12.

A WILLOW FLYCATCHER (Moucherolle des saules) was at Wilkin's field on Aug 5 (Hank and Carolyn Scarth). Another was on Whistle Road (GMI) on Aug 11 (Roger Burrows). A WESTERN KINGBIRD (Tyran de l'Ouest) was spotted on a wire north of Rogersville on Sept 29 (Jim Edsall), another was in Beresford on Aug 25 (Roger Leblanc), and more were reported.

Roger Guitard spotted a CAVE SWALLOW (Hirondelle à front brun) at Pointe Verte on Oct 8.

A CAROLINA WREN (Troglodyte de Caroline) visited Don Gibson's yard on Oct 15. Merv Cormier spotted a MARSH WREN (Troglodyte des marais) at Lorneville on Oct 3, and Ralph Eldridge also saw one on MSI on Oct 4.

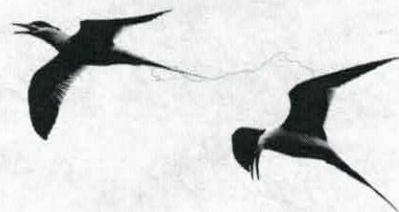
Merv Cormier reports a BLUE-GREY GNATCATCHER (Gobemoucheron bleu-gris) at Black Beach on Sept 12, and more were reported. A NORTHERN WHEATEAR (Traquet motteux) was located near the wharf in Lorneville on Sept 13 (Hank and Carolyn Scarth). A MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD (Merlebleu azuré) was reported on Stright Beach Road in Murray Corner on Aug 1 (Bertie McCabe and others), and it was still present on Aug 20.



Black-billed Cuckoo
Photo by H. Scarth



Pomarine Jaeger
Photo by L. Murison



Forster's Tern
Photo by H. Scarth



Laughing Gull
Photo by L. Murison

The first **BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS** (Jaseur boréal) were spotted in St-Leonard on Oct 19 (Roy and Charlotte Lapointe).



Bohemian Waxwing
Photo by S. Miousse

The first report of a **NORTHERN SHRIKE** (Pie-grièche grise) was on Miscou Island on Oct 22 (Steeve Miousse).

Roger Burrows noted a **WHITE-EYED VIREO** (Viréo aux yeux blancs) at North Head on Aug 17, and more were reported. A **YELLOW-THOATED VIREO** (Viréo à gorge jaune) was at Black Beach on Sept 12 (Gilles Belliveau). Roger Burrows observed a **WARBLING VIREO** (Viréo mélodieux) at Ox Head on Aug 22 and again on Sept 19.



Mountain Bluebird
Photo by H. Scarth

A **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** (Paruline à ailes bleues) was spotted by Merv Cormier and others on the road to Ox Head on Aug 27. A **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (Paruline à ailes dorées) was on Black Beach Road on Aug 8 (Merv Cormier). Merv Cormier had four **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** (Paruline verdâtre) in the Saint John area during the week of Sept 20, and others were reported. A female **PRAIRIE WARBLER** (Paruline des prés) was at White Head Island on Aug 2 (Roger Burrows), and more were reported. A **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (Paruline polyglotte) was at Black Beach on Sept 15 (Merv Cormier), one was at the PLBO on Sept 16 (Eileen Pike), and more were reported. A **VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** (Paruline de Virginie) was spotted and photographed at Mary's Point on Oct 26 (John Inman).

A **SUMMER TANAGER** (Tangara vermillion) was seen near Long Eddy

Point in late August (Roger Burrows). Two more were on MSI on Sept 19 (Ralph Eldridge).

A **BLUE GROSBEAK** (Guiraca bleu) was on MSI on Oct 1 (Ralph Eldridge), two more were on GMI on Oct 2 (Durlan Ingersoll), and more were reported. Two juvenile **INDIGO BUNTINGS** (Bruant indigo) were at North Head on Aug 18 (Roger Burrows), and others were reported.

A **DISKCISSEL** (Dickcissel d'Amérique) was at Ingalls Head (Roger Burrows) on Aug 22, one at Malbaie Sud on Sept 7 (Steeve Miousse), and more were reported.

An **EASTERN TOWHEE** (Tohi à flancs roux) visited Hank and Carolyn Scarth's yard on Oct 18, another male was in Riverside-Albert on Oct 24 (Stu Tingley), and a female at Mary's Point on Oct 27 (Jim Wilson and Merv Cormier). The first **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (Bruant des plaines) of the season was reported at Ox Head on Oct 3 (Roger Burrows). Merv Cormier identified a **FIELD SPARROW** (Bruant des champs) on Black Beach Road on Oct 14, another in Lorneville on Oct 20, and Stu Tingley saw two more at Mary's Point on Oct 24. Two **LARK SPARROWS** (Bruant à joues grises) were on MSI on Aug 15 (Ralph Eldridge) and more were reported. Bev Schneider reports two **GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS** (Bruant sauterelle) at Castalia Marsh on Sept 10. Two **LAPLAND LONGSPURS** (Bruant lapon) were in Sackville on Oct 11 (Gilles Belliveau and Stu Tingley), and another on McCann Island on Oct 13 (Stephen Clayden). The first **SNOW BUNTINGS** (Bruant des neiges) of the season were seen in the Millville area on Oct 23 (Linda Kneebone).

An immature YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (Carouge à tête jaune) was at Castalia Marsh on Aug 29 (Stu Tingley and others). A probable ORCHARD ORIOLE (Oriole des vergers) visited MSI on Oct 3 (Ralph Eldridge).

Ted Sears had a RED CROSSBILL (Bec-croisé des sapins) at his feeders on Oct 17.

Un PELICAN D'AMERIQUE (American White Pelican) était à la Malbaie Nord le 3 août (Steeve Miousse) et était encore présent dans la région le 28 août.

Roger Guitard a observé 2 HERONS VERTS (Green Heron) et une GRANDE AIGRETTE (Great Egret) dans la région de Petit Rocher et Belledune le 6 sept. Un autre Grande Aigrette était sur le marais entre Inkerman et Four-Road le 13 sept (Steeve Miousse)

Frank Branch, Jolande St-Pierre et Steeve Miousse ont identifié un BARGE MARBREE (Marbled Godwit) à Malbaie Sud le 14 août. Un BECASSIN A LONG BEC (Long-billed Dowitcher) était à la Dune de Maisonnnette le 13 août (Roger Guitard). Un BECASSEAU DE BAIRD (Baird's Sandpiper) était sur le Marais de Riverview le 24 août et 2 autres le 3 sept (Roger Leblanc), 2 étaient à Malbaie Nord le 29 août (Marcel David). Quatre BECASSEAUX A ECHASSES (Stilt Sandpiper) étaient au marais de Riverview ainsi que 2 BECASSEAUX ROUSSATRES (Buff-breasted Sandpiper) le 4 sept (Roger Leblanc).

La première observation de PIE-GRIECHE GRISE (Northern Shrike) était sur l'Ile de Miscou le 22 oct (Steeve Miousse).

Une HIRONDELLE A FRONT BRUN (Cave Swallow) était à Pointe Verte le 8 oct. (Roger Guitard).

Steeve Miousse a observé un DICKCISSEL D'AMERIQUE le 7 sept.

Un BRANT A FLANC MARRON (Lark Sparrow) était à Malbaie-sud le 13 Sept (Steeve Miousse)

Abbreviations : GMI (Grand Manan Island), MSI (Machias Seal Island), NMIL (Nature Moncton's Information Line), PLBO (Point Lepreau Bird Observatory).



Yellow-headed Blackbird
Photo by S. Miousse



Great Egret
Photo by H. Scarth



Festival of de la Nature

Nature NB's Festival of Nature and AGM

Nature NB's Festival of Nature (including the AGM) will be held September 2, 3, 4 and 5th, on the scenic island of Grand Manan. If you plan to attend, mark the dates on your 2011 calendar now. The festival and AGM will include boat trips to view whales and seabirds, birdwatching to catch the fall warbler migration, beach walks, wildflower walks, and more. Over 20 outings are being planned. Don't miss it!

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Le Festival de la nature de Nature NB (incluant l'AGA) se tiendra les 2, 3, 4 et 5 septembre sur la pittoresque île de Grand Manan. Veuillez noter les dates si vous prévoyez participer. Des croisières d'observation des baleines et des oiseaux marins sont prévues, ainsi que des sorties d'observation de la migration automnale des parulines, des marches sur la plage, des randonnées botaniques et plusieurs autres événements. Plus d'une vingtaine de sorties sont planifiées. Un événement à ne pas manquer!

Wild Weasels of Fundy National Park

Robyn Jeffery
Fundy National Park

My name is Robyn Jeffery and I'm an interpreter at Fundy National Park. I have a great job where I help visitors discover the rich natural and cultural history of the park. In order to get ready, I have worked to discover and experience as much of the park as possible, including the research our park scientists are conducting. So, in spring 2010, I jumped at the opportunity to work with the resource conservation group. More specifically, to eat, sleep, and breathe the important monitoring work on two weasel species found in the park.

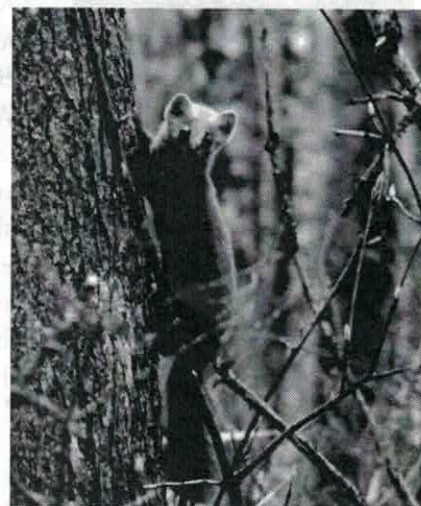
The American marten and the fisher are both members of the weasel family. Both of these predators occupy a place close to the top of the food chain in Fundy's forest ecosystem. They feed on small mammals, birds, seasonal fruits, and carrion. Both species rely heavily on large tracts of older-growth forest, a specific habitat type. They also have fairly low reproductive rates, with females producing only one to two young per year. Together, these traits make them sensitive to changes in their environment, and in turn, make these species useful for tracking the health of mature forests.

Keeping a close eye on the health of the ecosystems in the park is a central focus for resource conservation staff. Dan Mazerolle, one of Fundy's monitoring specialists, explained to me that it is impossible to monitor everything. The challenge is tracking the condition of a carefully selected number of ecological measures that together provide an accurate picture of an ecosystem's overall health, and this is where our two weasel species come into play!

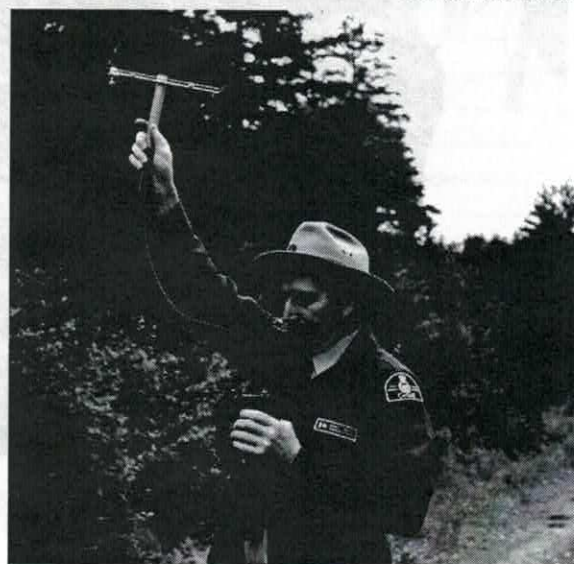
The first thing I did while on assignment was to familiarize myself with the history of marten and fisher in Fundy National Park. I discovered that both of these species were extirpated (became extinct in a particular area) by the 1940s due in large part to over-trapping and habitat loss. Fishers were reintroduced by the province just north of the Park in 1968, mainly to control the porcupine population. A total of 16 individual fishers were released at that time.

The marten reintroduction story has a closer connection to the park. I spoke with George Sinclair, a local resident and retired warden who was part of the park's reintroduction efforts in the late 1980s and early 1990s. George told me stories about trapping marten in northern New Brunswick where the marten population is quite healthy. At the time, working with marten was all new to him. He learned quickly though – especially when he transported his first group of marten down in plywood boxes only to have the marten chew their way through them. It was experiences like this that made George's job exciting.

Today, scientists such as Alain Caissie are out in the field helping to monitor the populations of marten and fisher that George and others brought back to the area.



A Marten
Photo (c) Parks Canada



George Sinclair tracking Marten
Photo (c) Parks Canada



A Fisher
Photo (c) Parks Canada

This is where my work went from being an assignment to an adventure! Picture this: 8 a.m., I arrive at the office, excited and dressed for the woods. Alain takes me through some preparations then we drive to the end of a road where we set off on snowmobiles for a day in the forest.

Over a period of two days, at 30 remote locations in the park, we set up motion-activated cameras next to bait stations. We trekked through beautiful hardwood stands I had never seen before. Lunch was carried in and enjoyed while sitting in the sun along the trail. It was such a treat to be part of this experience. The cameras were left at each location for a few weeks. This cycle is then repeated in the spring. This is the third year of study.

Capturing these weasels on camera tells researchers what habitat these two species occupy based on which bait stations they visit. In other words, the monitoring helps to determine if these species are present in an area of the park, which in turn helps to track the health of the entire forest ecosystem. Both Alain and Dan pointed out that this work has the added bonus of providing information on the distribution and occurrence of other animals that are inadvertently detected by the cameras. I got to see firsthand what other animals were attracted to the baited camera stations. Alain showed me some very cool photographs of snowshoe hare, squirrel, coyote, bobcat, and fisher.

But what about what is happening outside of the park? The marten and

Alain Caissie and Robyn Jeffrey
Photo (c) Parks Canada

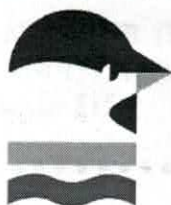


fisher story extends far beyond the park's boundaries. I spoke with Jean-Michel DeVink, a wildlife biologist with the province of New Brunswick, and local trapper Jim Marriner about the challenges regarding these species. The province, like Fundy National Park, does not have a direct population estimate of marten and fisher. They do, however, use harvest rates (number of animals trapped for their fur) as one indicator of population health.

Trapping of marten is restricted to zones in northern New Brunswick because southern populations are not large enough to sustain any trapping. Fisher

populations, as Jean-Michel explained to me, are fairly healthy throughout the province. "Fishers seem to be doing quite well and our indices are showing that they have a healthy population. Certainly our harvest data shows that despite the lower pelt prices in the last decade and a half, harvesting rates seem to be increasing."

Jim Marriner, who traps fisher and marten in New Brunswick, is also aware of changes in populations and recognizes, like Jean-Michel, the need for sustainable harvesting and keeping the existing population healthy. Dan Mazerolle pointed out that his data is consistent with the general findings of the province, which indicate



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that fishers are doing quite well and marten seem to be more scarce. Marten are still in the park area, however, and popping up at the bait stations.

My time speaking with folks such as Dan, Jean-Michel, and Jim helped greatly to broaden my understanding of the ecology and conservation of marten and fisher. These species are critical to the health of our forest ecosystems, and are sensitive to the large-scale changes occurring in our forests as a result of resource use and extraction.

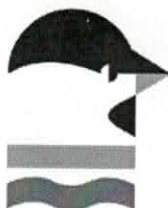
After a fun-filled two weeks, my assignment was complete. I spoke with Dan to see what is in store for these weasels in the future. "My hope is that by working closely with our provincial counterparts and various stakeholder groups that we can track significant changes in the population viability

of these species both inside the park and in the greater Fundy ecosystem to ensure that we maintain sustainable populations."

Working closely with the section was a thrill, to say the least. Now I can include this experience and the interesting story of our wild weasels in my interpretive programs. Just as I was fascinated with what I learned during those two weeks, I suspect that many park visitors would also be keen to learn about the wild weasels of Fundy National Park.



Alain Caissie and monitoring station
Photo (c) Parks Canada



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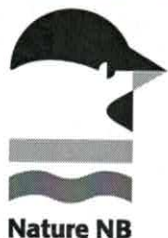
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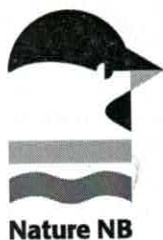


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