

# BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 15  
NUMBER 1  
MARCH 1988



## BNS Spring Programme

**MONDAY EVENING MEETINGS:** All meetings will start at 7:30 p.m. and, unless otherwise indicated, will be held in Room 244 of the Beveridge Arts Centre at Acadia University. All lectures and field trips are open to the public and BNS members are encouraged to bring friends and neighbours. Any changes in the date, time or subject of meetings are announced on posters, the Kings Kable notice board and in The Kentville Advertiser and The Hants Journal.

1. March 21 -- "Show and Tell" Night in Patterson Hall (Biology Building). Share your natural history interests with others. Bring a set of slides (10 - 15), a display collection, interesting books, etc.
2. April 18 -- Dr. Scott Cunningham will present an illustrated lecture on rarely visited coastal areas of Nova Scotia as seen and explored from seagoing canoes.
3. May 16 -- "Orchids of Nova Scotia - the Challenge and the Rewards". Our own Bernard Forsythe will illustrate his talk with his photographs of some 30 local species.
4. June 20 -- Peter Hicklin of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Sackville, N.B., will discuss our local shorebirds, their migrations, and the international attention they are currently receiving.



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The BNS Newsletter is published on equinoxes and solstices.

Editors: George and Margaret Alliston  
Art: Mary Pratt  
Production: Larry Bogan  
Distribution: Lana Churchill and Brenda Thexton

"The primary objective of the Society shall be to encourage and develop in its members an understanding and appreciation of nature. For the purpose of the Society, the word 'nature' will be interpreted broadly and shall include the rocks, plants, animals, water, air, and stars."  
from the BNS constitution

The Blomidon Naturalists Society is an Affiliated Member of the Canadian Nature Federation.

## Field Trips

Unless otherwise noted, all times are given for meeting at the Gym parking lot of Acadia University. Morning trips sometimes extend into the afternoon so you may wish to bring lunch. Where available, leaders' telephone numbers are included to allow those without access to local news to confirm trips.

1. Monday, April 4, 7:00 p.m. -- Canada Goose flypast at the Wellington Dyke. Leader: Sherman Bleakney (542-3604).

2. Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 p.m. -- an evening of owls, woodcock and perhaps frogs and salamanders. Leader: Bernard Forsythe (542-2427). Inclement weather date: Wednesday, April 27.

3. Saturday, May 7, 9:00 a.m. or 9:30 a.m. at the Cape Split parking lot -- our nearly annual Cape Split all-day, bring-your-lunch, hike for spring birds and flowers. Leaders: Sherman Williams (542-5104), Jim Wolford (542-7650), etc. Rain date: Saturday, May 14.

4. Saturday, May 14 -- Forest and Ground Vegetation in Blomidon Provincial Park. Halifax Field Naturalists field trip led by Pierre Taschereau and Art Lyons. HFN members are meeting at the Nova Scotia Museum at 9:00 a.m. for a short lecture then departing for the Blomidon Trail. If you are interested, call Milton Gregg at 454-0187 for a place and time to meet.

5. Saturday, May 21, -- Joint field trip with the Nova Scotia Bird Society to Paradise, Annapolis County. Meet at the Morse Estate in Paradise at 8:00 a.m.

6. Sunday, May 22, 7:30 a.m. -- Spring flowers and warblers along the Delaps Cove Trail, Annapolis County. Leader: Bernard Forsythe (542-2427). Alternate meeting place: Delaps Cove at 9:30 a.m.

7. Sunday, June 12 -- Nova Scotia Bird Society President's field trip led by Richard Stern (678-1975). Meet at the Cornwallis Inn parking lot, Kentville, at 8:30 a.m.

8. Sunday, June 19, 9:00 a.m. -- Yellow Lady's Slipper hike at Poplar Grove, Hants County, led by Jim Wolford (542-7650). Bring a lunch.

9. Saturday, July 9, 7:00 am. Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas Day. Jean Timpa (542-5678) will lead a day long trip to a yet to be identified survey square. Rain date: Sunday, July 10.

10. Sunday, July 17, 7:00 a.m. -- Canoe trip to bog at Methal's Lake to view orchids, etc. Led by Bernard Forsythe (542-2427). Bring your own canoe and, if you don't like having wet feet, your hip waders!

Speakers  
BNS Spring Programme

Dr. Scott Cunningham

Dr. Cunningham circumnavigated Nova Scotia by canoe several years ago and, since then, has developed a business venture in Tangier, Nova Scotia, where he conducts ocean coastal canoe and camping trips.

Bernard Forsythe

Bernard Forsythe is a long-standing member of the Blomidon Naturalists Society with strong interests in many diverse areas of natural history. His current passion is finding, identifying, documenting and photographing local orchids.

Peter W. Hicklin

Peter Hicklin began his shorebird studies at Acadia, completing his M.Sc. degree in 1981 with a study of the relationship of substrate, invertebrates and migrant shorebirds. Since then he has been employed by the Canadian Wildlife Service, concentrating on shorebirds and waterfowl of the Bay of Fundy. His Ph.D. thesis on eider ducks will soon be completed.



Acknowledgements

Our thanks to:

Jim Wolford for showing us his interesting slides of field trips from the Arctic and the Caribbean;

Sam Vander Kloet for proving there's more to blueberries than meets the eye and more than one way to travel around the world;

Sherman Bleakney for suffering with us on the winter woodland hike;

Merritt Gibson for finding more than his "30 eagles" quota on the winter raptors field trip and for his initiative and effort in launching "BNS Nature Notes";

Sharon Hawboldt for carrying on with the Annapolis/Digby area field trip despite the dreadful weather;

and everyone who contributed to the Newsletter.

### BNS Nature Notes

In January the BNS embarked upon a new educational program with the beginning of a series entitled "BNS Nature Notes" which appears in the Friday edition of the Kings County newspaper The Advertiser. "BNS Nature Notes" addresses topics in natural history in its broadest sense including the fields of biology, geology, astronomy, paleontology and archaeology. "Nature Notes" is not directed specifically at the avid naturalist but rather at the reader who is a more casual observer of nature. To capture the attention of this group, each note is brief (250-300 words), is accompanied by an illustration and, at least in the early articles, deals with topics that are likely to be familiar.

Merritt Gibson, who is in charge of preparation of pamphlets and special publications for the BNS, is the co-ordinator and editor of "Nature Notes" and, indeed, has been the author of most "Notes" published to date.

### Jean Timpa Honoured by BNS

At the January 18 meeting, Jean Timpa was presented with an Honorary Life Membership in recognition of her long and outstanding service to the Blomidon Naturalists Society. Jean was a founding member of the Society, served as the new Society's first Vice-President and subsequently served as a Director and on Program and Nominating Committees. However, the most notable of Jean's many contributions to the Society was her editorship of the Newsletter. In August, 1974, Jean, along with Sherman Williams, produced the first issue of the Newsletter. For the next 13 years -- until the autumn of 1987 -- Jean, as editor or co-editor, presided over the development and production of the Newsletter. Jean remains an active member of the Society but is currently focusing her energies on her task as Regional Co-ordinator, Annapolis Valley Region, for the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas.

Other recipients of Honorary Life Memberships are Dr. Robie Tufts, John Erskine, Dr. Kenneth A. Harrison, Rachael Erskine and Dr. Albert E. Roland.

To Jean we extend both our congratulations and our thanks.

### Membership and Fees

Annual membership fees for adults in the Blomidon Naturalists Society are \$7.00 per person. Fees for those under sixteen are \$1.00. Each member receives four issues yearly of this Newsletter. Membership is not essential to attend either meetings or field trips; guests are always welcome at these functions.

Please use the form included in this Newsletter to pay your 1987-1988 fees.

## A Change in the Newsletter Distribution

The cost of printing and mailing a 28-page copy of the Newsletter is currently about \$1.10. Of this \$0.63 (57 % of the total cost) is associated with mailing (\$0.57 postage plus \$0.06 for an envelope). To reduce costs associated with mailing, starting with this issue we will have the Newsletter available for distribution at the equinox and solstice BNS meetings. Members of the Newsletter team will "man" a station where members can pick up their copies. The station will be in operation for approximately 20 minutes before and after the meetings. We encourage members to pick up their copies as well as copies for members who are unable to attend provided they know that they will be able to deliver within one or two days. All copies not distributed at the meeting will be mailed promptly after the meeting.

Approximately 75 % of your membership dues is currently used to produce and distribute the Newsletter. Savings incurred by this change should assist in forestalling future increases in membership dues and provide funds for other Society activities including a larger Newsletter of improved quality.

## The Newsletter and N.S. Conservation

In the past, articles from the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests publication N.S. Conservation have frequently been reprinted in the "From Other Publications" section of the Newsletter. The Newsletter editors have actively encouraged members to add their names to the N.S. Conservation mailing list. Since this excellent publication is of considerable value to those interested in natural history and conservation, is published in a form we cannot hope to duplicate (e.g. high quality glossy paper with colour photographs) and is available free, in the future we will assume that all interested BNS members receive N.S. Conservation and discontinue reprinting articles from it. If you still are not receiving N.S. Conservation, see the last issue of the Newsletter for details of how to get on the mailing list.

## BNS Newsletter Submissions Deadline - June 1, 1988

The Newsletter is a forum for the dissemination of information among Society members and all members are urged to contribute. Articles concerning local natural history and conservation issues, reports, letters to the editor, book reviews, poetry, sightings, trivia, jokes, etc. are all welcomed.

Trivial Tidbits of Local Natural History is selected, compiled and edited by Jim Welford. Submitting your written observations to Jim in chronological order would greatly simplify his task. Address them to Jim at:

Biology Department  
Acadia University  
Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0

Last-minute observations can be called in to 542-2201, ext. 334 (leave a message).

All other contributions to the Newsletter should be sent or given to:

George Alliston (542-3651)  
R.R 3  
Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0

or to other members of the BNS executive.

The editors would greatly appreciate all submissions, even those typed or word-processed, being at least double-spaced to facilitate both editing and word processing. Sketches or diagrams should be submitted in final form, preferably on a separate page.

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NATURE NEWS  
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Calling All Bird Feeder Watchers!

Have you ever wondered where the birds at your feeder come from, where they go when they leave, and why bird numbers change from year to year? Do you want to know what birds come to feeders in different parts of North America? Project FeederWatch is a new continentwide survey of bird feeders designed to help answer questions such as these, and you are invited to join.

Project FeederWatch is a cooperative venture of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory, and is in the midst of a successful pilot year with 4,000 participants from all across North America. The project is modelled on a survey run successfully in Ontario for the past 11 years, which has shown, among other things, that male Evening Grosbeaks winter farther south than females; Black-capped Chickadees are found in low numbers when Evening Grosbeaks are abundant, and numbers of many species at feeders parallel those found on Christmas Bird Counts.

Sound interesting? Project FeederWatch needs thousands of additional observers across the continent to help answer questions about feeder birds on a broad geographic scale. You need not be an expert birder to take part -- the project concentrates on common species, and baffling rarities can be ignored. Although counts are made over a one- to two-day period of your choice every other week from November through March, you are not obliged to watch every time, nor must you watch continuously on count days. All observations are recorded on computer-readable forms so that detailed summaries can be provided to participants promptly each season and to insure that these data are readily available for further analyses.

In return for your observations, Project FeederWatch will send you an annual newsletter and report on the season's results, plus two issues of Birdscope, the Laboratory of Ornithology's research newsletter. If you can't take part but would like to receive these publications anyway, you may subscribe to them separately.

Project FeederWatch requires an annual registration fee of \$9 (Canadian) which helps to pay for data forms, analysis and preparation and mailing of reports and newsletters. To join, write to:

Erica Dunn  
Coordinator, Project FeederWatch  
Long Point Bird Observatory  
P.O. Box 160  
Port Rowan, Ontario  
NOE 1M0

Include your name and address, state whether you wish to contribute observations from your feeder or just receive reports, and enclose your cheque for \$9 (made payable to "Project FeederWatch"). Please sign up right away, to help plan how many forms to print and to avoid mailing delays. You will receive all materials and instructions just before the season begins in mid-November, 1988. Project FeederWatch began in Canada. Let's keep our end up and show those to the south of us where their birds really come from!

### Kings Environmental Group

by Andrea Lynn  
Wolfville, N.S.

Although there have been issue-centered environmental action groups in Kings County in the past, such as the Kings Association to Save the Environment founded solely to deal with the impending threat of uranium mining in the county, Kings County has had a long-standing need for a general environmental group. Kings Environmental Group (KEG) is a new organization formed to address that need. Its main objective is to voice local environmental concerns in a manner that will effect the most appropriate remedial action. Sometimes this will mean raising residents awareness through media, pamphlets and public workshop sessions. At other times KEG may bring concerns directly before municipal and town councils for consideration. Still other issues may require direct action or lifestyle adjustments by county residents.

KEG will be holding open public meetings on the first Monday of every month, usually at 7:30 p.m. The location will vary each month as a different town or village hosts a meeting. This will provide an opportunity for local issues of a collective nature to be voiced and to lend individuals and groups in a town or rural area the support of a county-wide organization. Watch for notices of meetings on your local bulletin boards, in the coming events columns of local papers, on AVR or find out by calling 679-0662.

KEG's current projects involve recycling and public education about domestic garden chemicals.

KEG is looking forward to exchanges of information and sharing of concerns with the members of the Blomidon Naturalists Society.







## Nova Scotia Trees of Distinction Program

by George Alliston  
West Brooklyn, N.S.

The Nova Scotia Trees of Distinction Program was launched in 1986 by the Nova Scotia Forestry Association to gather and record information concerning unique trees in the province. In May, 1987, the public was invited to "nominate" trees for consideration. In some parts of the province, Kings County being a notable example, public response has been somewhat disappointing. Until February, 1988, only one tree had been nominated in this county; however, a recent article in The Advertiser has stimulated more interest and the number of Kings County nominations has now risen to ten. As knowledgeable and avid observers of nature, many BNS members must be aware of trees that are worthy of nomination.

Trees that may be nominated are not restricted by location or species i.e. they can be in forests, on farm land, in urban settings or in your back yard and they may be native or exotic species. A Tree of Distinction must qualify in either of two categories: either by size alone or as a "notable tree" which is distinguished by its historical significance, distinctive shape or form, age, unusual location or any other outstanding significant feature.

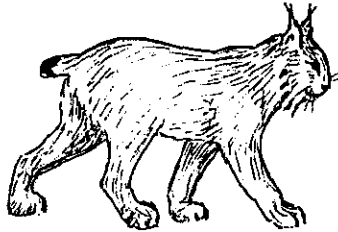
All nominations will be reviewed and evaluated by a committee. The committee intends to produce a preliminary booklet containing brief descriptions of the trees currently nominated, for release during National Forest Week in May 1988. It is intended that the program be continued for another three or four years during which the booklet of nominated trees may be updated and released from time to time to stimulate further interest and more nominations. The final product of the program will be a book, probably 80 to 100 pages in length depending upon the number of nominations. The book will contain photographs of, and pertinent information concerning, all of Nova Scotia's Trees of Distinction including location, size, significance and the name of the individual who first nominated the tree. It is hoped that, by virtue of their status as "Trees of Distinction" these trees will be afforded some degree of future protection.

To nominate a tree or find out more about the program, contact Dick Kendall at:

1 Minas View Drive  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Telephone: 542-7706

Dick is a member of the Nomination Committee for the Trees of Distinction Program and he will gladly provide you with application forms and/or further details about the program.



### Operation Lifeline

by George Alliston  
West Brooklyn, N.S.

In 1986 the World Wildlife Fund and Canada Life Assurance Company started Operation Lifeline, an educational program to provide public school students with an opportunity to learn more about endangered species. The program provides a complete education package designed to be used in the classroom, primarily in grades 4 through 8. By December, 1987, approximately 5,000 classes representing about 150,000 students across Canada were participating in the program.

The program is built around six learning units which begin by making students aware of the problems and conclude by helping them become part of the solutions. The learning units are based on the questions:

1. What does endangered mean?
2. What are Canada's endangered species?
3. Why are they endangered?
4. Why care?
5. What is being done?
6. What my class can do!

A key element of the program is its emphasis on involving students in conservation action.

To join Operation Lifeline and receive the education kit costs (once-only) \$20. For this you receive a 150-page Activity Book, a 40-page Teachers' Guide, a large Endangered Species poster, a decal for each student in the class and a Lifeline Newsletter. The Lifeline Newsletter is published regularly and keeps all classes informed of the "best and brightest" Lifeline activities.

To join Operation Lifeline or to obtain a free colour brochure containing more details about the program, write:

Operation Lifeline  
60 St. Clair Ave. E.  
Suite 201  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4T 1N5.

If you can bring this program to the attention of teachers, you will doing teachers, students and endangered wildlife a favour.

## Society of Canadian Ornithologists

The Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO) was formed in 1982, in conjunction with the Canadian hosting of the XIX International Ornithological Congress in June 1986. Since its inception its membership has grown to over 150 members and the Society now publishes Picoides, the Bulletin of the SCO, twice a year.

The objectives of the SCO are to promote ornithology in Canada, whether it is enjoyed by amateurs or professionals, and to provide a common voice and information exchange for persons interested in birds.

To join, send your name, address, telephone number and a cheque or money order for \$10 to:

Dr. Philip H.R. Stepney  
Provincial Museum of Alberta  
12845 - 102 Ave.  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5N 0M6.



### Cyril Coldwell Receives 1987 Environmental Award

On March 9, 1988, Cyril Coldwell was awarded a 1987 Environmental (Individual) Award by the Minister of the Environment for Nova Scotia, the Honourable Roland Tornhill. This is the highest of three categories of awards presented by the Province of Nova Scotia to individuals or groups for outstanding contributions to environmental protection and/or enhancement. There were nine Environmental Awards granted for 1987.

Cyril's award is much deserved; his lifelong commitment to wildlife is exemplary. As a youth, Cyril's interest in wildlife was encouraged by Dr. Robie Tufts. Although Cyril chose to maintain his father's farm in the Gaspereau Valley instead of pursuing a wildlife related professional career, his commitment to wildlife did not diminish. In keeping with the tradition of ornithologists of the time Cyril collected bird specimens and kept records, irrefutably establishing the occurrence of several species never before recorded in Nova Scotia. Examples of his outstanding taxidermy can be found in both private and scientific collections such as the National Museum of Canada, the Nova Scotia Museum and the R.W. Tufts Laboratory collection at Acadia University.

In 1965 Cyril undertook a long-term capture-mark-recapture study to learn more about the movements of the Common Raven population wintering in the Gaspereau Valley. Using a specially designed trap baited with carrion, several thousand individuals were marked and released. Through the winter months, other species of birds were attracted to the food provided by Cyril. The wintering population of Bald Eagles, which were then struggling to recover from the effects of pesticides, has gradually increased to over 60 birds in recent years. Maintenance of his carrion "feeding station" for eagles is now aided by the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests.

In the early 1960's Cyril began caring for sick and wounded hawks, owls and eagles in an attempt to rehabilitate them for release to the wild. His raptor recovery centre has grown considerably and is now jointly sponsored by the Department of Lands and Forests and the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Cyril's obsession with raptors did not stop here. He constructed nesting platforms for wild Great Horned Owls, nest boxes for Barred Owls (first in North America) and has bred Great Horned Owls successfully in captivity.

In 1976 he was appointed curator of Acadia University's wildlife museum at which time his scientific contribution was fully realized by the academic community. Offshoots of Cyril's work with Common Ravens, Bald Eagles and Barred Owls have been the subjects of several honours and masters theses at Acadia. Cyril is still extremely active in the field and opens his doors to groups wishing to see his captive birds or to watch the wild Bald Eagles feeding near his farm. His life and work has been the subject of three television documentaries and several articles.

Cyril was a founding member of the Blomidon Naturalists Society and was President of the Society in 1975-76. He was nominated for the Environmental Award by the Society.

Congratulations Cyril!

### Survey Confirms Budworm Decline

reprinted from  
Forest Times  
Volume 9, Number 4  
December 1987

A major decline in the spruce budworm population in Nova Scotia has been confirmed in a survey of over-wintering larvae by Lands and Forests.

The 1987 survey indicates that the budworm population is down throughout the province by an average of 44 percent.

Along the Northumberland shore, where most of the damage has occurred in recent years, the budworm population declined by 83 per cent. Only a few small patches with moderate to extreme population levels remain in this area.

Results of the survey confirm the population decline indicated in July when a joint aerial survey by Lands and Forests and the Canadian Forestry Service detected no visible budworm defoliation.

Primarily because of the declining budworm populations, the forested area treated with B.t.k.\* last spring was reduced from the planned level of 125,000 acres to about 75,000 acres.

Although plans for the 1988 B.t.k. program have not been finalized, Lands and Forests Minister Jack MacIsaac says "it could be considerably reduced because of the major decline in budworm populations."

\*Editors' Note: B.t.k. refers to the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*. When ingested by caterpillars, the bacterium infects and ultimately kills them, but does not infect other animal species (including people). This method of biological control is also widely used by organic gardeners.

## Wildlife Advisory Council Appointed

reprinted from  
Forest Times  
Volume 9, Number 4  
December 1987

Dr. Donald Dodds of River Denys, Inverness County has been named chairman of a nine-member Wildlife Advisory Council.

Appointed by the Provincial Cabinet, the Council is a component of the Wildlife Policy introduced by the government last spring.

A former Professor of Biology at Acadia University, Dr. Dodds is an active member of several wildlife organizations and professional groups.

Since his retirement from Acadia University, Dr. Dodds has operated Cervid Consulting, an independent firm which consults in wildlife management and policy.

Vice-chairman is Jim Stockman, of Yarmouth, a professional forester and president of Forsite Limited, a silviculture contracting and forestry consulting firm that serves western Nova Scotia.

Other members appointed to the Council are retired research scientist Harry Freeman Sr. of Greenfield, Queens County; Hugh Fairn of Wolfville, a past president of the Canadian Wildlife Federation; private woodlot owner Jack Coldrick of Middle Musquodoboit; professional guide and outfitter Tom Kennedy of Upper Stewiacke; professional forester and woodlot owner Raymond Smith of Springhill; Art Tobin of North Sydney, past president of the Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation; and Doug MacNeil of New Glasgow, avid sportsman and outdoorsman and managing editor of the New Glasgow Evening News.

The Chairman of the Forestry Advisory Council, Halifax County sawmiller Laurie Ledwidge, will also sit as an ex officio member of the Council.

Dr. Dodds will sit as an ex officio member of the Forestry Advisory Council.

The new council is expected to play a key role in advising the government on fish and game regulations so that they will be consistent with the conservation, management and protection objectives of the new Wildlife Policy.



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PUBLICATIONS  
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Forest Times

Forest Times is published six times a year as an Education and Public Information project under the federal/provincial Forest Resources Development Agreement.

Although its stated major purpose is to provide information on forest improvement to private landowners and others interested in the forests of Nova Scotia, it includes articles that appeal to naturalists and conservationists (see excerpts in this issue of the Newsletter). Subscriptions are free and can be obtained by writing:

Mr. Jim Guild, Editor  
Forest Times  
P.O. Box 68  
Truro, N.S. B2N 5B8.

New Nova Scotia Field Guide

by Sherman Williams  
Avonport, N.S.

Most Nova Scotians live on or near some part of Nova Scotia's 7500-kilometre shoreline. As each person who walks the seashore knows, this is where some of nature's most interesting sights capture our attention and arouse our curiosity. For our next shoreline stroll, there is a new guide available that can go with us to answer questions, extend our observation powers and multiply our satisfaction. It is the latest addition to the "Nature Notes for Nova Scotians" series, SUMMER NATURE NOTES FOR NOVA SCOTIANS: SEASHORES, by Merritt Gibson. Dr. Gibson also wrote the two previously published volumes in this series entitled WINTER NATURE NOTES FOR NOVA SCOTIANS and SUMMER NATURE NOTES FOR NOVA SCOTIANS: WOODLAND ANIMALS.

SUMMER NATURE NOTES FOR NOVA SCOTIANS: SEASHORES is a reference book designed specially for Nova Scotia. It highlights the plants and animals most likely to be seen in the vicinity of our coastline. When attempting to identify something using this handbook, one does not have to search through, and be confused by, material that does not apply to Nova Scotia. About 400 species and species groups have been described and, where additional information is included in other books in the "Nature Note Series", cross references are provided.

The book is well organized for convenient field use. The novice naturalist need only classify the species in question into one of five categories: mammal, bird, fish, invertebrate or flowering plant. He then consults the "guide" (a simple key) at the beginning of the appropriate section and, using this, can quickly and easily narrow down the possibilities to a few species or, in the case of some invertebrates and plants, species groups. The detailed species/species group descriptions are then consulted to

make the definitive identification. Each of these descriptions is divided into three sections:

- Description - basic field identification criteria are presented
- Habitat - contains information on the geographical distribution and preferred habitats
- Notes - contains life history and other interesting information.

The guide includes a large number of black and white drawings done by Twila Robar-DeCoste, an artist and illustrator with a special interest in natural history. These very clear illustrations will be most helpful in making proper identifications.

Merritt Gibson is well known to members of the Blomidon Naturalists Society. He has been an active member for several years and is currently Director, Pamphlets and Special Publications. On behalf of the Society's membership, I would like to congratulate him on this excellent guide. SUMMER NATURE NOTES FOR NOVA SCOTIANS; SEASHORES is a book we will surely want to have when we explore Nova Scotia's wonderful shoreline.

SUMMER NATURE NOTES FOR NOVA SCOTIANS; SEASHORES, Merritt Gibson, 1987. Lancelot Press Ltd., Hantsport, N.S. 386 pp.

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**FIELD TRIP REPORTS**  
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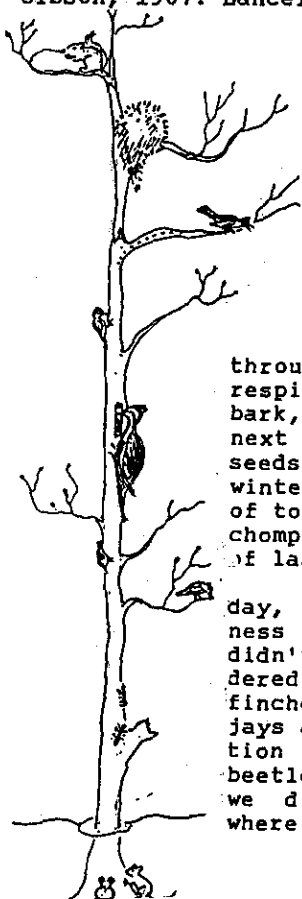
Hard Times in the Hardwoods

Moosehorn Lake  
January 17, 1988

by Sherman Bleakney  
Wolfville, N.S.

A tree's lot is not a happy one. All through the short summer season trees drink, respire, sweat and produce more twigs, more bark, more leaves and overwintering buds for next spring as well as innumerable procreative seeds. And to what end? All through the long winter season they stand helplessly in a state of torpor while the beastly forest creatures chomp chomp chomp away at the accomplishments of last summer's sap, sweat and toil.

On January 17, a lovely mild winter's day, 23 members (2.3/car) of BNS bore sad witness to this carnage in the conifers. We didn't actually see the seed stock being plundered by flocks of those many species of finches, grosbeaks, crossbills, nuthatches, jays and so on. Nor did we see the destruction wrought by carpenter ants and boring beetles that eat the hearts out of trees, but we did see many gaping holes in tree trunks where woodpeckers had



chiseled into the ant and beetle tunnels. The workings of downy, hairy and pileated woodpeckers (the latter cut large rectangular, not round, holes) were evident and Bernard Forsythe discovered a tree branch preyed upon by the yellow-bellied sapsucker. This diabolical bird cuts neat rows of holes and drinks the life blood of the hapless trees. Those open wounds introduce insects and fungi and other horrible afflictions.

Far worse are the mammals. Horrid porcupines actually skin the trees and sneaky mice do it from beneath the snow. In tree tops, squirrels nibble on new buds and cones. Ruffed grouse (we saw their tracks) gorge on nutrient-rich buds, buds that, alas, are thus denied their sylvan destiny of exuberant spring growth and instead become egg yolk.

The winter's heavy wet snowfalls, we noted, had played into the paws of the furry forest fiends. Trees were bowed down with their crowns tethered by the crusted snow and thereby, as we observed, were subjected to multiple decapitation by snacking snowshoe hares and equal depredation by the dentaries of white-tailed deer. Yet the worst was yet to come. Our last observation was of a beaver, sitting and feeding at streamside in the bright sunlight. It should have been at its lodge back at the lake shore, frozen in for the winter with a full supply of cut tree branches stored under the ice. How grossly unfair that the local trees should have visited upon them, in dead of winter, that summer scourge. The beaver had swum hundreds of metres beneath the lake ice and the stream ice to pop up through thin ice, climb the stream bank, cut limbs from maple and alder, and drag these back to the ice hole and down into those dark and frigid depths. However, through the magic of metabolism and mitosis, those tree limbs will, in spring, emerge from those depths as web-footed limbs of beaver kits, soon to cut down whole trees, to trim more branches, to build more lodges, to transfer more trees into more beaver, more deer, mice, porcupines, hares, grosbeaks, siskins, ad infinitum.

So, from our trek through a local winter wonderland, we learned the true meaning of the hard part of the word hardwoods.



Winter Raptors  
February 6, 1988

by Merritt Gibson  
Canning, N.S.

Saturday, February 6, was sunny and cold. Fourteen cars left the Acadia Gym and headed for Canning and Sheffield Mills to begin a driving tour to look for hawks and eagles. The cars were filled with BNS'ers, several members of the Halifax Naturalists Society, and three birders from Windsor.

Only a few red-tailed hawks and bald eagles were seen during the first part of the trip. However, a stop at Canard Poultry gave everyone a chance to see the glaucous gull that the Tufts had spotted a few days earlier. The gull was most cooperative and everyone had a good view as it circled past. Later, at Ells' farm, we watched a northern shrike as it flew back and forth between the bushes and power lines.



Bald eagles were found in numbers at Hennigar's Pond in Sheffield Mills. About eleven birds were perched in the trees and several others soared overhead, some interacting with common ravens. Nine more bald eagles were found at Archibald Farms and six additional ones at Blueberry Acres. Red-tailed hawks were frequently seen on this part of the trip.

We ate lunch in the Robie Tufts Laboratory of Ornithology at Acadia. While here, Jim Wolford used mounted specimens to explain the characteristics to look for when identifying hawks. He also showed the plumage changes that occur in immature bald eagles of different ages.

Following lunch we visited Cyril Coldwell's farm to see his caged barred owls, snowy owls and bald eagles, and then we drove to Grand Pre and Evangeline Beach. On the way to the Guzzle, two rough-legged hawks were seen and, at the Guzzle, two Lapland longspurs flew onto the path and stayed for everyone to watch.

The total raptor count (uncaged) was 39 bald eagles, 39 red-tailed hawks and 2 rough-legged hawks. This is not a particularly high count, but it is better than the "30 eagles" that someone guaranteed at the January meeting!



Annapolis Royal / Digby Area  
NSBS/BNS Field Trip  
February 13, 1988

by Sharon Hawboldt  
Clementsport, N.S.

It must have been the feeble promise of possible clearing weather later in the day that brought 18 birders over icy roads to meet in Annapolis Royal on February 13. By 10:00 a.m. we were on our way to explore the shores of the Annapolis Basin and the Bear River.

At the Annapolis causeway we studied each common goldeneye, straining our eyes, without luck, for a possible Barrow's goldeneye. Many herring and black-backed gulls were resting on the ice. When rain sent us back to our cars, we drove along towards Port Royal. At the Habitation there was a fierce wind and we saw few ducks, but this made us appreciate what winter might have meant to the early settlers!

We made a second stop at the causeway and were rewarded with excellent viewing conditions. I later received phone calls from passers-by wondering what rare sighting could possibly have had us all out on such a day!

Clementsport, our next stop, meant a warm fire, hot coffee, and lots of lively "bird talk". The usual flock of pine siskins and American goldfinches was busy at the thistle feeder. We were surprised, though, to have an adult red-tailed hawk arrive at the other feeder, affording some of us a look from above.

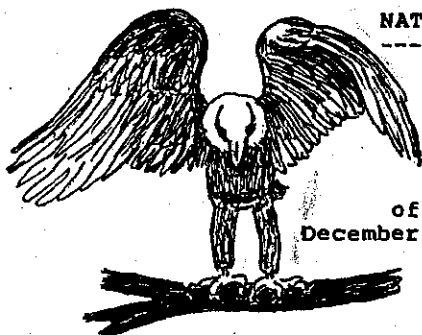
A snow squall started as we set out in the afternoon, but we were lucky to have enough clearing to allow for good viewing of the oldsquaws, buffleheads and red-breasted mergansers that are common on the Basin.

At Bear River we watched hundreds of American black ducks feeding in the vegetation along the shore.

From Digby wharf we saw a raft of perhaps 50-100 greater scaup and enjoyed seeing buffleheads swimming and diving around the fishing boats. All the gulls, though, appeared to be herring or greater black-backed gulls. We searched for the old faithful lesser black-backed gull but to no avail.

The icy road to the purple sandpipers at Point Prim was not so inviting. We agreed to call it a day and return home - a truly good-natured group of dedicated birders, from Yarmouth to Wolfville.

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 NATURE REPORTS  
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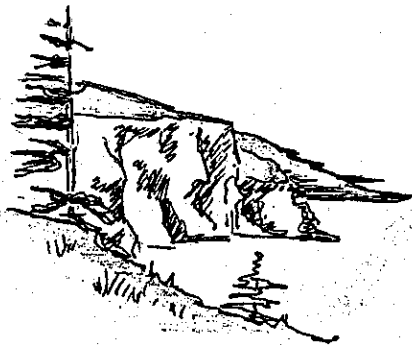
TRIVIAL TIDBITS  
 of Local Natural History  
 December 31, 1987 - February 28, 1988

selected and compiled  
 by Jim Wolford  
 Wolfville, N.S.

(Please keep those written notes coming in!)

<u>Date</u> (1987)		<u>Obs</u>
Dec 31	-a northern shrike impaled a small bird in a tree in Wolfville	GT
 (1988)		
Jan 1	-single common grackles at White Rock and in Wolfville	RN, JW
Jan 2	-Hants Co. Xmas Count: an immature red-headed woodpecker, an American kestrel, 70 purple sandpipers, 2 northern shrikes, 1 common grackle, 2 coveys of gray partridge, and a living spider on the snow!	BNS KLC
Jan 3	-30 Bohemian waxwings at Cheverie -a male red-bellied woodpecker at Noel Shore (was present Dec 20(SN) until Feb 20(BBT)) -a ruby-crowned kinglet, 100 American robins, etc. at Gaspereau	MT, JW BLF
Jan 4	-a great horned owl hooting at Scots Bay MTh(fideJT) -an immature white-crowned sparrow at Port Williams (still there Jan 24)	LC
Jan 7	-a loggerhead shrike in Wolfville -a red squirrel eating highbush cranberries in Wolfville	PCS JW
Jan 9	-a northern shrike at Gaspereau	CKC
Jan 10	-50 mourning doves at Sheffield Mills	JW
Jan 12	-a loggerhead shrike on Wolfville Ridge -11 bald eagles at Port Williams	JGT MG
Jan 13	-13 Canada geese at Grand Pre (still there Jan 25)	BBT
Jan 14	-3 yellow-rumped warblers on Wolfville Ridge	JW

- Jan 16 -2 wood ducks, 1 northern pintail, 1 American wigeon, 1 American coot at Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth NSBS  
 -1 harlequin duck, 1 Barrow's goldeneye, 1 hooded merganser, 1 lesser black-backed gull, 30 common black-headed gulls, 1 Bonaparte's gull, dozens of Iceland gulls, and 2 thick-billed murres in Halifax NSBS  
 -2 snowy owls at Hartlen Point (s. of Dartmouth) NSBS  
 Jan 17 -beavers active at holes in the ice near Sunken Lake BNS  
 Jan 18 -the loggerhead shrike on Wolfville Ridge caught a small mammal but then let it get away (this bird was also seen on Jan 19, Feb 11, and Feb 19) 8 observers



- Jan 20 -barred owl hooting at Cheverie KLC  
 Jan 21 -3 American robins near Pereau MZ  
 -a flying moth (winter moth?) on Wolfville Ridge JW  
 Jan 22 -3 Barrow's goldeneyes at Annapolis Causeway JGT  
 Jan 23 -single shrikes at Harbourville and Kentville DC, MZ  
 -beaver tracks on ice at Black River Lake BNS  
 -Stu Tingley's Eurasian kestrel found at Minudie, N.S. ELM  
 (this was seen well by JGT, RS, et al., with the aid of 4 Questar scopes on Jan 24 & then very poorly & distantly by ME, BLF, & JW on Jan 31 - serves us right for being a week late!)
- Jan 24 -a snow goose on floating ice at Evangeline Beach DK  
 -6 northern shrikes seen on a drive from Sheffield Mills to Gaspereau MG  
 -a very large adult bald eagle had a fatal accident (hit a wire?) at Gaspereau - it weighed 5.5 kg and had a wingspan of 2.21 m (7'3") CKC  
 -a dark gray gyrfalcon at Grand Pre was photographed and seen to have caught a house sparrow ME  
 -a sandhill crane has been near Yarmouth for at least a week fide PC  
 -70 purple sandpipers at Port George BLF

Jan 7 -rusty blackbirds seen twice this month at Port Williams LC

Jan 25 -an American kestrel in the Canard Valley MG

Jan 27 -one person in Kentville is concerned that the normally common birds seem to be nearly totally absent this winter (especially blue jays, European starlings, etc.). Why so? Anyone else feel the same way? AW

Jan 31 -150+ common redpolls at Minudie ME, BLF, JW

-2 immature Iceland gulls at Melanson BBT

Feb 4 -an immature glaucous gull at Canard Poultry JGT

Feb 5 -near Gaspereau, a scene right out of Hitchcock's "The Birds": the trees were black with hundreds and hundreds of crows DG

-a northern flicker seen in Wolfville BBY

-a water shrew was photographed near Aylesford Lake, on ice along the edge of an open stream ABH

Feb 6 -6 Canada-geese at Grand Pre JSBo, RE

Feb 7 -20 purple finches and 6 pine siskins in Wolfville (then "everyone" reported siskins at feeders - I had 90 of them on March 1) JW

-40 mourning doves at Wolfville feeder BBT

-5 northern shrikes all in one spot (3 trees) at Greenfield MZ

-75 Bohemian waxwings on Wolfville Ridge MT, JW

-a razorbill, a thick-billed murre, and a common murre at Margaretsville JGT et al

-2 immature Iceland gulls at Wolfville BBT

Feb 12 -finback whales observable in Halifax area CBC

-6 pine grosbeaks near Greenwich MG

Feb 13 -6 horned grebes, 2 red-necked grebes, lots of diving ducks in Annapolis Basin/Digby Harbour NSBS

Feb 14 -7 green-winged teal, 1 merlin at Sheffield Mills MG

Feb 16 -3 redpolls at a Gaspereau feeder GW



Feb 17 -3 redpolls at a Wolfville feeder GT

-a perched & preening sharp-shinned hawk was ignored by chickadees attending a Wolfville feeder only 2 metres below the hawk! JSB

Feb 18 -40+ Canada geese flew SW over Mount Uniacke MZ

Feb 20 -a white-throated sparrow singing quietly MZ

Feb 22 -120+ Bohemian waxwings south of Hantsport JW1, SW

-4 to 6 redpolls in New Minas (since early Feb) DM, fidesW

Feb 24 -2 short-eared owls in courtship flight at Cheverie KLC

Feb 26 -1 belted kingfisher at Annapolis Royal BBT

-9 white-tailed deer together near Middleton BBT

-a great horned owl on a nest has 3 eggs, east of Melanson LD

- Feb 28 -the great horned owl at Cyril Coldwell's house at Gaspereau is back on its nest-platform CKC  
 -melting snow has revealed lots of very conspicuous ant hills along roads and in fields, and lots of signs of voles in orchards JW  
 -annual EAGLE COUNT from Sheffield Mills to Kentville to Gaspereau to Grand Pre by various local observers: 56 bald eagles (33 adults, 23 immatures); 58 red-tailed hawks; 4 rough-legged hawks; 1 sharp-shinned hawk; 1 American kestrel  
 -a snowy owl has spent the winter at Saulnierville (Digby Co.) DA  
 -a snowy owl at Grand Pre, also 30 brant? JSB  
 -a male northern cardinal at a Lakeville feeder apparently has been there since November) BLF, JGT  
 -a thick-billed murre and 30 purple sandpipers at Port George JGT, RS



A final note is needed here about shrikes. This has been a year to remember in two respects. First, a loggerhead shrike was present in the Wolfville area from Jan 7 to Feb 19. The loggerhead is mainly a southern and western species; therefore its presence here this winter may be just coincidental with the fact that we've been privileged to have a bumper crop of wintering northern shrikes. I looked through my journal and found northern or "shrikes" mentioned for at least 20 dates (spanning Nov 12 to Feb 28) from Wolfville, Middleton, Annapolis Royal, Grand Pre, White Rock, Gaspereau, Wolfville Ridge, Cherry Hill, Kentville, Harbourville, Sheffield Mills, Amherst, Truro, and Greenfield. Two reports (BLF, MG) were of six seen in one day's driving, and another (MZ) was of five together in one small area.

Contributors (Thank you all!)

DA	Diane Amirault	RN	Reg Newell
JSB	Sherman Bleakney	SN	Seward Neil
JSBO	Sherman Boates	BNS	Blomidon Naturalists Soc.
CBC	CBC Radio	NSBS	Nova Scotia Bird Society
CKC	Cyril Coldwell	PCS	Peter Smith
DC	Donna Crossland	RS	Richard Stern
KLC	Karen Casselman	BBT	Brenda & Bill Thexton
LC	Lana Churchill	GT	Gerry Trueman
PC	Peter Comeau	JGT	Judy & Gordon Tufts
LD	Lloyd Duncanson	JT	Jean Timpa
ME	Mark Elderkin	MT	Miriam Tams
RE	Richard Elliot	MTh	Merrill Thorpe
BLF	Bernard Forsythe	AW	Alison Webster
DG	Dean Gertridge	GW	Mrs. G. Westphalen
MG	Merritt Gibson	JW	Jim Wolford
ABH	Adel & Bill Horton	SW	Sherman Williams
DK	Don Keith	JW1	Jelmer Wiersma
DM	Doug Moore	BBY	Betty & Barry Yoell
ELM	Eric Mills	MZ	Marion Zinck



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ARTICLES  
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English Visitor at Bird Feeder!

by Paul Yates  
Curry's Corner, N.S.

On August 11, 1987, a British school teacher was first seen in Windsor, Nova Scotia. It frequented coffee shops and schools in the area and good views were obtained. During this period it fed mainly on chocolate chip cookies, a far cry from its usual food of fish and chips. Identification points noted were bright eyes, a small black camera and short stalky legs.

I had arrived from England on--a one-year teacher exchange program and was very excited at the chance to see such North American exotica as American robins, blue jays, song sparrows, American redstarts, raccoons, skunks, turtles, etc., that I was familiar with from watching nature programs on television. My special study was to be Nova Scotia birds and, to that end, each evening Roger Tory Peterson (Eastern Region) and I would take walks around Windsor together.

The American black duck and the ring-billed gull are "fashionable" in England, being new to the British list. When they are seen people come in flocks from all over Britain to view such rare species. I hoped to--see these species here and did so on my first day. I am used to feeding ducks with bread and have found that, in England, even the more unusual species can be tempted. What a difference here where, perhaps due to hunting, ducks and Canadians do not seem to tolerate each other as well.

The American robin (a thrush) is much larger than I expected and behaves more like an English blackbird than a European robin. I saw my first ruby-throated hummingbird on Aug 24. I had thought that these were tropical birds and did not expect to see one here! I wrote to my students in England in great excitement and they replied in equal excitement, "Can we come over and see it?"

I find I must walk much farther to find birds in Canada than in England where there seems to be a bird in every bush. I did identify two good areas for fall migrants in the Windsor area: the ponds at King's College and the ponds by Highway 1 in Falmouth where new species appeared almost daily throughout September and October. Among other species I recorded 12 species of warblers, a yellow-throated vireo (observed on Sep 27 at a range of about four feet), a marsh wren (Sep 24) and sora rails (on three separate dates).

People in Nova Scotia should appreciate their birds of prey. Except for the European kestrel, they are scarce in England due to pesticides, egg collectors, lack of nest sites and, for eagles, lack of carrion. How about a pesticide for egg collectors?

As part of my bird studies in Nova Scotia I have set up two winter feeders in downtown Windsor. In my view these feeders have been a success; I have never had nuthatches and woodpeckers at my feeders in England! The most common species at my Windsor feeders in early winter (besides you-know-what) were American goldfinch (max. 38), evening

grosbeak (max. 60) and brown-headed cowbird (max. 25). The numbers of these species have dwindled through the winter until, on Feb 7, they were replaced with pine siskins (max. 26) and purple finches (max. 32). I found it odd that the ratio of "red" to "brown" purple finches averaged 1:17 during the first three weeks of February. Any suggestions why?

Since I have been in Canada I have identified 157 species of birds, 111 of which I had not seen before. I am looking forward to spring and the bird migration as well as the emergence of the reptiles and amphibians.

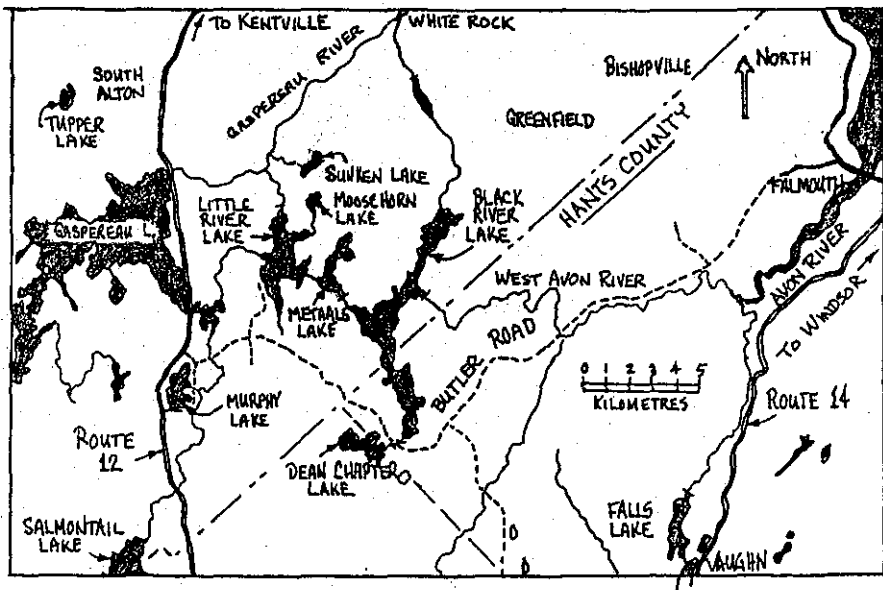
I would like to thank members of the Blomidon Naturalists Society for their friendship, hospitality and, particularly, transportation that enabled me to enjoy the meetings and the Christmas Bird Counts.

### Butler Road

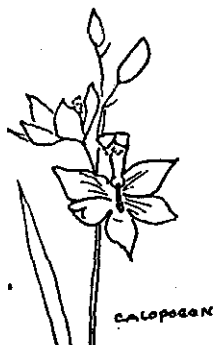
by Bernard Forsythe  
Wolfville, N.S.

A cursory look at the Butler Road would probably be disappointing; that is unless one likes to look at miles of granite rocks and cut-over areas. In recent years I have made many trips to this region and would like to share some of my observations.

To get to the Butler Road, turn east off the New Ross Road immediately north of Murphy Lake. Butler Road is a logging road that goes around the south end of Black River Lake. One can continue on along the Avon River and come out at Upper Falmouth or turn south just east of Dean Chapter Lake and end up on the road from Leminster to New Ross. (1:50,000 topographic maps 21A/15 and 21A/16 cover this area.)



This huge forest has been undergoing extensive cutting for many years. There are still blocks of mature woods surrounded by areas in various stages of regrowth. Although I hate to see so much of our woodland cut, it has created habitats for a great variety of plant and animal life. My early trips were to look for boreal nesting birds. After a couple of visits it was obvious there was a lot more to be found along this road. During May and June a stop every quarter mile or so in the proper habitat will produce a great many bird species. Learning the bird songs and good hearing help a great deal in finding the species one wants.



Family groups of Gray Jays can often be seen at the edges of the mature woods. It is easy to see why the early ornithologists thought that the very differently plumaged juvenile Gray Jays were a separate species of jay. Other species such as Red- and White-winged crossbills, Pine Siskins, and even Pine Grosbeaks, often thought of as winter birds, can usually be found along this road. Around the bog edges, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Rusty Blackbirds, and Swamp Sparrows can be found nesting. For those who would like to experience the amazing song of the Winter Wren, Butler Road is the place to go. Last summer I found one of these tireless bundles of energy every mile or two. The flute-like phrases from our best songsters, the thrush family, will cause one to stop and listen, wondering how it is possible for sound to be so pleasing.

For me the wood warblers alone are worth the trip to the Butler Road. Within earshot of the road one can find almost all of our breeding warblers. In the mature woods, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Parula, Cape May, and the striking Black-throated Blue Warbler can be found. In the areas of young trees and raspberry canes, Yellowthroat, Redstart, and Magnolia Warblers are very common. I have also found good numbers of Palm and Mourning Warblers in such habitats. Along the slow-moving streams, Canada Warblers and Northern Waterthrushes are present. These, and many other species, can keep any birdwatcher busy for days.

Birds are not the only wildlife that can be found. Actually the mosquitoes, blackflies and deerflies will find you. What to do about them? If at all possible I stay away from the insect repellents. They are irritating, nauseating, and worse than the flies. Concentration and being far-sighted helps. Concentrate on all the bird songs you hear and you will not hear the mosquitoes buzzing around your



head. Focus on the Solitary Vireo twenty feet up in the spruce tree and the blackflies walking across your glasses will disappear. What you can't hear or see won't hurt you. After the first few bites it works, at least for me. Well - ah - sometimes.

The flora along Butler Road is varied and most interesting. I am currently fascinated with orchids and my comments on flora will be confined to this species group. At least a half dozen species can be found in the ditches just by looking from your car window as you drive slowly along the road. The ditches on both sides are a foot or more deep and quite wide. They stay wet most of the summer and have a carpet of mosses and lichens; ideal conditions for orchids. In early July, two of our pretty pink orchids, Calopogon and Rose Pogonia, can be found in large numbers at the peak of their bloom. In 1987, I found about two dozen Rose Pogonia with two flowers per plant; in our area, it usually produces only one flower per plant. Although the Ladies-tresses orchids are not particularly showy, they are very numerous and dozens of colonies containing literally thousands of plants can be found all the way from Murphy Lake to Leminster. A visit to this area in September and early October will find two very similar species, the Nodding Ladies-tresses and the Yellow Ladies-tresses, in bloom. With a bit of study these two species can be told apart. One difference is that the Nodding has a pleasant fragrance at some times of the day, while the Yellow's scent is disagreeable.

Mammals, reptiles and fish can also be seen. On most trips one will see white-tailed deer. Beaver and muskrats can be seen in some ponds and black bears are present in the area. Once a fox walked out onto the road in mid-day and studied me for several minutes. Another time I was able to get a good photograph of a snapping turtle in a small pond beside the road. In late May, Dean Chapter Brook is full of twenty-inch long White Suckers on their spawning run.

If you leave your car, make sure you park it well off to the side of the road so that log trucks can pass. Other than the odd log truck, I usually have this fascinating stretch of road all to myself. All this and only fifteen minutes drive from Wolfville!

### A Guide to Some Excellent Canoeing Lakes in Kings County

by Larry Bogan  
Cambridge Station, N.S.

On the North Mountain west of the Dalhousie Road and on the western borders of Kings County is a group of lakes that have not been developed and are excellent places to enjoy canoeing. Most of the area is Crown Land and spread through the region is a series of service roads that provide, in most cases, easy access to the lakeshores. The bigger lakes of this group are Cloud Lake, Frog Lake, and Shell Camp Lake. These are also the most westerly lakes of the county, and I believe the most interesting because they have complex

shapes and many islands. Slightly smaller are Randall Lake, South River Lake, Nimchin Page Lake, and the Chain Lakes. If you like small lakes then you can canoe on Birch Lake, Fox Lake, Mistake Lake, Boot Lake, Tomahawk Lake, Oak Lake, North Twin Lake or South Twin Lake. I find South Twin Lake is the most interesting of the small lakes.

Outside the Crown Lands, are several lakes whose shores are cluttered with cabins but whose waters can provide some enjoyable canoeing. These are Lake George, Aylesford Lake, Loon Lake, Lake Paul, Armstrong Lake, and Lake Torment. Hardwood Lake has only the Girl Guide Camp on it and provides some quiet canoeing. Loon Lake is my favourite of the "developed" lakes because of its convoluted shape and lack of cottages on its shores: however, it is connected to Aylesford Lake when the water is high and motor boats travel into it then.

The accompanying map shows the locations of these lakes and the roads that provide access. However, a topographical map is better; the one you need is Gaspereau Lake 21A/15, 1:50,000 scale.

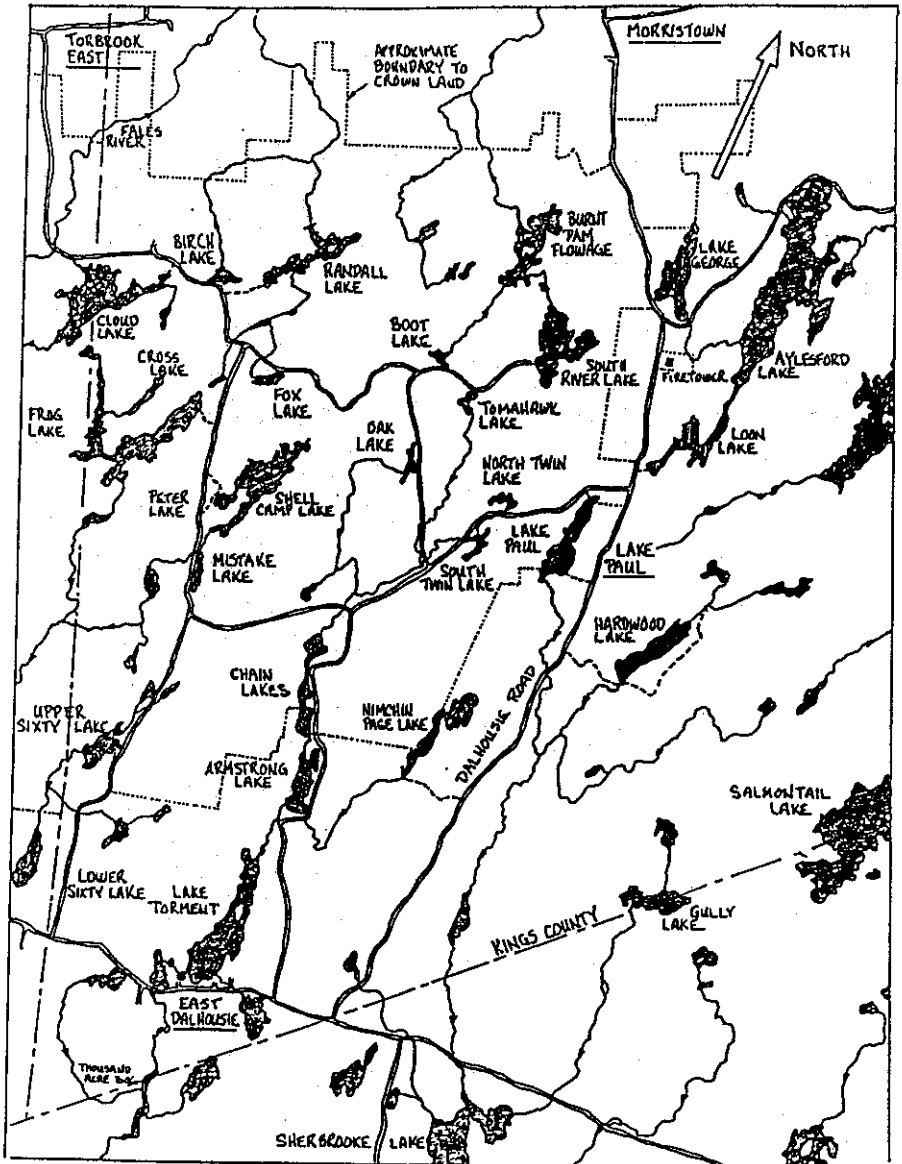
Access to some of the lakes is difficult from the road. Frog Lake, Randall Lake, and Loon Lake have very rough access roads and require high clearance vehicles to travel safely over them. Nimchin Page Lake can be reached by car but the road is a bit rough and wet in the spring. This is true of many roads in this area.

In the following text I describe some of the lakes from my experience in canoeing them:

**Loon Lake:** Aside from Lake George and Aylesford Lake, this is the quickest to get to from the Kentville - Berwick area and yet has interesting canoeing. Access is via a short woods road directly off the Dalhousie Road. If your vehicle cannot manage the woods road, it is not too far to portage in. There are two narrows in the lake that provide the delightful feeling of canoeing on a river. If the wind comes up while you are on the lake, it can create a minor annoyance as it always seems to blow up these channels and make canoeing difficult. On the southern part of the center section, three nice coves provide good places to see wildlife. An excellent shallow bay exists on the west side of the lake when the water is not too low. Unfortunately, the noise from the nearby Dalhousie Road can be heard on the lake.

I have had many pleasant experiences on this lake. Loon Lake always reminds me of loons because it was here early one summer morning that I was serenaded with long calls by four birds with the most eerie calls I have experienced. On one occasion I had the thrill of watching an osprey fishing the lake. Usually there are belted kingfishers flying from tree to tree at the end of the coves and if you stop for a snack Canada Jays frequently will come to investigate. Last autumn we surprised two deer drinking from the lake as we rounded a bend in the narrows; that was the closest and most memorable encounter with white-tailed deer that I have had. They looked up and gazed at us for several seconds before snorting loudly and then running off into the woods. In the shallow bay I have seen great blue heron, and waterfowl and frogs in abundance in the lush aquatic vegetation.

Lake Paul: This lake is developed but the eastern side is free of cottages. To get to the launch site, take the first left on the gravel road into the Crown Lands block after leaving the Dalhousie Road. There are usually several campers at this spot. The lake extends south and you will pass a small island before reaching the narrows in the lake. The south end of the lake has a long outlet that has extensive aquatic vegetation along its shores and it can be



canoed for a fair distance. If you use a launch site near the cottages at the southern end of the lake you will get there much sooner, but you miss some good exercise.

**South Twin Lake:** Continue west from the Lake Paul turn-off and, past North Twin Lake on the right, cross a small bridge with a beaver dam to the left. Here you can see only a small section of the lake. Put in on the west side and canoe into the several arms of the lake. At the south and north ends there are small marshy areas to explore. The north arm has some very large rocks on the shore which are pleasant to sit on in the sun.

**South River Lake:** Take the first road heading north past South Twin Lake and turn right at the T in the road. Since the lake is used as a water supply for the Berwick Hydro development, water levels may fluctuate widely. When water levels are low many rocks are exposed. The lake is one of the better lakes for swimming as it has several nice gravel beaches, one of the best being at the launch site. There is an extensive marsh west of the lake. Only at high water can you canoe into the northern section of the lake. The lake contains several islands of different sizes.

**Shell Camp Lake:** To get to this lake you must put into the smaller Peter Lake. You gain access to Peter Lake by leaving the northward-bound, new access road and driving on a section of the old road that goes by the shore of the lake. Peter Lake and Shell Camp Lake are separated by a marsh at the north end of Peter Lake and you can use the connecting water to get into Shell Camp Lake. Here there are islands, coves, and large rocks to explore. Like most lakes in this region, the shore is rocky but there are a few places to stop and disembark along the shore. It is a larger lake and the wind tends to sweep its length, so be careful on windy days. The north end is narrower with many coves and, to me, is the most interesting part of the lake. You might also want to explore the south end of the lake where it drains into Mistake Lake.

**Frog Lake:** This is the most difficult of the lakes to access, but provides the most varied canoeing. Again, you have to take the old road and use a woods road off it to the west. This road is very rocky and steep in spots, so use a truck or four-wheel drive vehicle. When you reach the lake, you are at the north end of the eastern arm. You can now paddle to the south end of the lake past a multitude of islands, through a narrow channel into the western arm and north through smaller and smaller sections of that arm. Some of the islands are quite large and are interesting to explore. There is a long, small lake between the two arms that may be accessible from the western arm through a marsh -- something else to explore. There are also many coves to explore so don't go too fast. The southern end of the eastern arm is a large cove with a long outlet. I have found at least one family of loons on each of these lakes and it was on Frog Lake that I got my best look at a family of four paddling right past our canoe. After you have completed your exploring you can count on about one hour of steady paddling to get back to the launch site.

Cloud Lake: Rather than coming in from the Dalhousie Road, it is better to take the new access road from Torbrook East. The distance is shorter and the driving faster and smoother. The easiest place to put in is at the camp built for the use of the Greenwood Armed Forces Base on the northwest shore. However, if it is being used you will have to go to the launch site at the eastern end of the lake. Both have such excellent beaches that motor boats could be put in this lake. (This will detract from the lake during the busy fishing season and vacation weekends). I found this 'the' lake to canoe if you love exploring channels between islands. There are so many large islands at the northeast end that if you are unfamiliar with the lake and don't have a good map you could get lost. It also has the best camping places of any of the lakes. In my opinion it is the prettiest lake in this group. In addition, its waters are clearer than most other lakes.

Randall Lake: This is a long, narrow lake with sizeable marshes at several locations on its west side. I have gained access to the lake by two different routes, neither of which is very good. There is a woods road off the main service road just south of Birch Lake; it is one kilometre long and dry but very rough. The other access is along the road to a former radio tower south of Nicholville and is longer, also rough, not well marked, and requires driving over an unsafe bridge. The lake is a delightful one to canoe. There are a couple of narrow arms in the northern section that provide interesting canoeing when water levels are high. The main attraction of Randall Lake is its remoteness.

Hardwood Lake: If the Girl Guide Camp is not in session you can use the beach at the Camp; otherwise there is easy access just past the entrance to the camp near the outlet of the lake. The upper end of the lake is the most interesting with its narrow inlet from Kerr and Caribou lakes. The rest of the lake has no coves but just straight rocky shores. If you like canoeing through narrow channels in marshland, put your canoe in north of the old bridge over the inlet (the road around the lake will take you there if you do not wish to paddle up the lake). In the spring, when the water is high, you should be able to paddle to Kerr Lake, and observe wildlife in the marsh along the way.

Nimchin Page Lake: This lake has the clearest water of all the lakes in the area, undoubtedly because it is at the head of its drainage area and has no bogs draining into it. Its access is by a not-often-used road directly off the Dalhousie Road (see map). You put in at the south end and paddle through a relatively narrow section with beautiful hardwoods on the west shore. At the narrows between the south and north sections you may have to push your canoe over sand bars and logs to get into the northern section. There is a road into the northern end but it is blocked; however, you can use the landing for a stop-off spot for a hike along the road. The land here has been cut over and the small trees and shrubs provide nesting sites for many birds.

**Aylesford Lake:** This lake is large and has been extensively developed; however, the eastern arms are quiet, varied, and worth canoeing. You can put in from the north end of the lake and paddle past the cabins on the eastern shore to the coves. Some of the woods roads between Aylesford and Gaspereau Lakes will get you nearer the eastern arms but you will have to carry your canoe through a short distance of woods. There are many good-sized islands that give the area a feeling of smallness and I have found at least one small beach suitable for swimming. There are an abundance of large rocks at the shore on which to sit and sunbathe or eat. At the northern end of these arms is a dam used by the Nova Scotia Power Corporation to control the flow of water into its power generation system along the Gaspereau drainage. The adventurous can portage past the dam to the stillwaters along the North River and eventually get to Gaspereau Lake. I would advise exploration of the portages before undertaking the trip, because there are several, and they change with the widely varying water levels.

**Stillwaters:** Stillwaters exist along the streams and rivers that connect the lakes. They are excellent canoeing when they are deep and long. They also have the advantage of not being as dangerous on windy days, and they usually travel through wooded, marshy, rocky, and quite varied terrain. There is hardly ever any development along them and I like them better than most lakes. You will usually see more wildlife on them than on the lakes; I have encountered many ducks, turtles, deer, owls, muskrat, and beaver. Stillwaters are more difficult to get



to than lakes and usually do not provide as extensive canoeing. There are many in the area but the one I visit most often is between Aylesford and Gaspereau Lake.

**North River:** This is the best one I have been on, and from the map, appears to be the biggest. Access may be gained at several places along the road from Rt. 12 to Aylesford Lake. I like putting in off the woods road just before reaching the Aylesford Lake Cottage road. Here you can see a marsh to the east before reaching the bridge. Put in there if the water is high enough; otherwise go to the bridge and portage to the river. You can also go through the woods to the west and reach another nice but shorter stillwater. With one portage past some shallow rapids (portage on the south side over a small hill) you will be in another very pleasant stillwater. This one is just below the dam at Aylesford Lake.

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