

CAPE SPLIT -
AND
BLONIDON PROY PARK

Blomidon Naturalists Society
Spring 2005 – Volume 32 Number 1

Blomidon Naturalists Society

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)

BNS Executive

Past president	George Forsyth	542-7116
President	Liz Vermeulen	681-0061
Vice-president	Mike McCall	678-6273
Treasurer	Harold Forsyth	542-5983
Secretary		

Directors	Glenys Gibson	582-1273
	Jean Gibson	678-4725
	John Harwood	582-3320

The Blomidon Naturalists Society is a member of the Sable Island Preservation Trust and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists and is an affiliate member of the Canadian Nature Federation.

The Blomidon Naturalists Society is a registered charity. Receipts (for income tax purposes) will be issued for all donations.

Visit us on the web
<www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/home.htm>

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Contributions to the BNS newsletter are always welcome. Members are encouraged to share unusual or pleasurable nature stories through the pages of the BNS newsletter. If you have a particular area of interest, relevant articles and stories are always welcome. Send them to Jean Timpa by mail (25 Gaspereau Ave., #1, Wolfville, NS B4P 2C5) or by e-mail <jtimpa@ns.sympatico.ca>.

Upcoming newsletter deadline

Summer, June 15, 2005

Editorial Board

Chair: Jean Timpa (902 542-5678)

Committee: Merritt Gibson, Sherman Williams, George Alliston

Production: Doug Linzey

Distribution: Bill and Brenda Thexton, Judy Tufts, Lorna Hart

Advertising: Liz Vermeulen

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EDITORIAL

How Active Should We Be?

When the Blomidon Naturalists Society was formed nearly 31 years ago this spring, not only did we appoint the usual executive members, but early on we had a conservation committee to keep an eye on environmental issues in our immediate neighbourhood, which for us is basically Kings and Hants Counties. Depending on the chairperson, the committee was more active some times than others, but it did delve into some interesting issues along the way. Most recently the philosophy of the committee seemed to involve working toward informing and educating us, but not getting directly involved in letter writing or raising Cain. The committee is now chairperson-less, so we also need a volunteer with enthusiasm for this type of work.

My own feeling is that we should complain to the powers that be about certain situations; it is our right, and we should be exercising it, not putting up and shutting up while it becomes too late to reverse a poor decision. A complaint from an environmentally based friendly group such as ours will have more effect than a number of single complaints from individuals. There is power in the mass! They may say no to us, but they can't ignore us as easily as one person here and one there. We can gain the attention of the media more easily as a group than as individuals, too. We should still act alone, though.

One very scary issue on our doorstep right now is the one concerning the blasting and exporting of the North Mountain to New Jersey to make pavement and roofing shingles. Their environmental laws will not allow them to do what they can do here! They will provide no jobs to local people. They must carry ballast on their huge ships up here in order not to be too high up on the water in winds. So, of course, that has to be jettisoned into our waters before the rock can be loaded. Just what our scallop beds and lobster fishery do not need! I don't know what ballast usually consists of, and I don't think I want to know, but probably we all should just the same.

I used the North Mountain in that previous paragraph because the same company has now asked for permission to blast and sample at Victoria Beach, Annapolis County, and is looking at other places all the way up the Fundy coast as far as Scots Bay. The application for Victoria Beach has been stalled for the time being. I know we feel pretty small up against big corporate America, supported so far by our governments, but if we don't stand up against these types of intrusions on our way of life, we will have no excuses for complaining later.

What are your wishes about tackling this kind of issue? Information only? Education? An active committee reporting to us each meeting? Helping the existing groups in Little River and Victoria Beach? A first-rate battle through the media with the governments? Financial aid to the other groups? Lawsuits? How far should we be prepared to go on this and other unfriendly-to-the-environment topics? The executive needs to know your feelings on this. We need a chairperson right away! Contact any one of us listed in the front of this newsletter ASAP if you can chair or would be willing to serve on such a committee. Future generations of Nova Scotians certainly deserve better!

Jean Timpa, editor

Interested in Writing Biographies?

It has been suggested that some of our more notorious BNS members should be introduced to the membership as a whole. And, for historical purposes, we should be recording something of their lives and contributions while they and their relatives and acquaintances are still around and available for interviews.

Over the years, we have had regular columns in the newsletter about astronomy, weather, and birds. So why not a regular biographical feature? What makes these naturalists tick? Is there a common thread? If you can take on this task, please contact the editor, Jean Timpa, at <jtimpa@ns.sympatico.ca> or 542-5678. Don't worry if you're short of ideas – the executive has plenty. Thanks.

Blomidon Naturalists Society

Spring 2005

Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month (except July and August) in the auditorium of the K.C. Irving Environmental Centre, Acadia University. The Centre is on University Avenue, up the hill from the Acadia arena. Parking is available at Wheelock dining hall, along Crowell Drive immediately east of the Centre, at the Acadia arena, the student union building, or on Westwood Avenue. Everyone is welcome.

Please note a change in programming for March. We have moved our regular monthly meeting with Ron and Carol Buckley's talk on Costa Rica to March 28 to accommodate the Missa Gaia performance at Convocation Hall on March 21.

Monday, March 21, 2005 – Missa Gaia – Mass of the Earth at Convocation Hall, Acadia University. This is a multimedia performance by the Acadia University Chorus and guests, directed by David Buley. It is a celebration of the whole Earth as a sacred place, magically combining voices, photos, instrumentation, and the recorded sounds of a Tundra Wolf, birds, Harp Seals and singing Humpback Whales. Tickets are \$10 at the music department office or at the door.

Monday, March 28, 2005 – Flowers, Birds, Waterfalls, and Volcanoes in Costa Rica. Ron and Carol Buckley will have had a couple of fascinating tours to Costa Rica and will share their experiences with the natural history, geology, and scenery of this beautiful country.

Monday, April 18, 2005 – Sable Island: The Land of Legend and Mystery. Paul Illsley spent two weeks on Sable Island as part of a mapping team from the Centre of Geographic Sciences (COGS) in Lawrencetown. Their air photo survey and GPS mapping project will be used as a new base map for ongoing island research. Paul is an exceptional

photographer and will present an illustrated talk on not only the project but also the island and its inhabitants.

Monday, May 16, 2005 – Walk the Long Walk. Put on your backpack; we are going to hike the 2,658-mile Pacific Crest Trail with Janet Roberts. We'll cross Southern California's searing deserts, rise to glorious heights in the Sierra Nevada, and follow the volcanoes of the Cascades all the way to Canada. Learn about her six-month journey and view some of the spectacular vistas she enjoyed along the way. Janet is a member of the Cobequid Naturalists Club.

Monday, June 20, 2005 – Kentville Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Bernard Forsythe spent much of last summer doing a field inventory of this local bird sanctuary for the Canadian Wildlife Service and catalogued over 100 species of birds. Bernard will give us an illustrated talk on the various habitats and wildlife he found there.

Monday, September 19, 2005 – Ocean Migration of Atlantic Salmon: Knowns, Unknowns, and their Role in the Decline of North American Populations. Since Mike Dadswell spoke to us six years ago, two studies have been completed on ocean migration of Atlantic salmon, and what was then speculation is now hard fact. New information shows that they migrate as far east in the Atlantic as Norway and north on both sides of Greenland. Since salmon from both sides of the Atlantic seem to use the same migration path, it's not surprising that high-seas fishers have figured out how to exploit them. Mike will bring us up to date on the migration patterns and the illegal exploitation and politics – to explain where all the salmon have gone.

Monday, October 17, 2005 – Whither Human Society? Marjorie and Martin Willison will host a talk full of information with directives for near-future implications for human society globally.

Monday, November 21, 2005 – Hiking the Dream: A Family's Four-month Pioneer Trek across Canada along the Trans Canada Trail. Along with extreme temperatures, impassable trails, and assorted wildlife, the Didkowskys found something more enduring – the heart of a nation in its people, who shared their friendship, songs, and stories.

Field Trips

Unless otherwise indicated, all field trips will begin at the Wolfville Waterfront Park. Please note we have changed to this location because of congestion at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre during Farm Market days. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday, March 20, 2005 – Birding the Fundy Shore. Jim Wolford (902 542-9204) will lead a joint field trip with the Nova Scotia Bird Society, with stops along the Fundy Shore and on to Annapolis Royal and the ferry terminal at Digby. We will be looking for Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, mergansers, loons, grebes, Purple Sandpipers, murre, etc. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Wolfville waterfront or 10 a.m. at Port George. Dress warmly and bring a lunch. No storm date.

Sunday, April 10, 2005 – Pond Life Through a Microscope. Todd Smith, of the Acadia biology department, will organize an indoor field trip to observe the fascinating and incredible diversity of living organisms found in pond water. Individual microscopes and one connected to a television set will be set up in a lab in the biology building, Patterson Hall, University Avenue, Wolfville, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. You can expect to see representatives from many phyla, including bacteria, algae, diatoms, ciliates, flagellates, hydras, flatworms, roundworms, and rotifers.

Sunday, April 24, 2005 – Early Spring Birds of Kings County. Jim Wolford (902 542-9204) will lead a joint field trip with the Nova Scotia Bird Society to local ponds and surrounding area. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Wolfville waterfront. Bring lunch, warm clothes, binoculars, scopes, field guides, and appropriate footwear.

Saturday, May 7, 2005 – Cape Split. Jim Wolford (902 542-9204) and Sherman Williams (902 542-5104) will lead a hike to Cape Split. The hike is an excellent opportunity to see carpets of spring beauty and other early spring flowers. If you arrive at Cape Split at mid tide you will be treated to the sights and sounds of the immense tides where more water flows through the channel between there and the Parsborro shore than

the combined flow of all the rivers and streams in the world. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 8:15 a.m. or at the start of the trail in Scots Bay at 9 a.m. Pack a lunch and drinking water and wear suitable footwear. The walking is easy but it is a long hike, about 16 km return.

Saturday, May 14, 2005 – Spring North American Bird Migration Count. Everyone interested in counting birds is invited to participate in the 14th annual NAMC. See page 23 for details.

Sunday, May 15, 2005 – Belleisle Marsh. Meet Richard Stern (902 678-4742) and the Nova Scotia Bird Society at 8:30 a.m. at the tidal generating station in Annapolis Royal. Richard will lead us on a tour to a mixed or wooded area in the morning and Belleisle Marsh in the afternoon. Bring a lunch and suitable footwear.

Sunday, May 22, 2005 – Cape Split. You will have a second opportunity to make the hike to Cape Split with leaders Jim Wolford (902 542-9204) and Sherman Williams (902 542-5104). Spring wildflowers and birds will be abundant. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 8:15 a.m. or at the start of the trail in Scots Bay at 9 a.m.

Wednesday, May 25, 2005 – Spring Birds and Plants on the Gaspereau River Trail. Bernard Forsythe (902 542-2427) will lead an evening walk up the Gaspereau River from White Rock. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 28, 2005 – Blomidon Provincial Park. In conjunction with Parks Are for People, Jim Wolford (902 542-9204) will lead a walk from the campground about 2 km to the temporary pond that has the very rare and beautiful Fairy Shrimps, etc., and to the lookoff toward Five Islands Park. This is a beautiful time of year and location for spring flowers and birds. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 9:15 a.m. or at the lower park gate of Blomidon Park at 10 a.m.

Saturday, June 4, 2005 – Birding for Seniors. Join Bernard Forsythe and Judy Tufts on a leisurely stroll behind Evergreen Home for Special Care in Coldbrook. This trip is designed to set a pace for those not up to some of the usual rigorous hikes. This beautiful area hosts a variety of habitats, with fields, a stream, swamp, deciduous woods, giant pines,

and river's edge all within a relatively small and easily accessible area. We will take our time to look and listen to the many local birds, look for wild flowers, and enjoy the outdoors. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 8:30 a.m. or at the parking lot behind Evergreen at 9 a.m. Juniors to seniors welcome.

Wednesday, June 8, 2005 – Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens. Peter Romkey (902 542-2201) will host an evening tour of the gardens at the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre in Wolfville. Meet at the entrance to the gardens at 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 11, 2005 – Neary Pines Bald Eagles. See the oldest pine/hemlock forest in the Valley, original Acadian cellar remains, active (hopefully) Bald Eagle and Red-tailed Hawk nests, Poor Farm grave yard, beech hardwoods along the Cornwallis River, and the birds and flowers along the way. George (902 542-7116) and Harold (902 542-5983) Forsyth will lead this easy two-hour early morning walk. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 8 a.m. or Noggins Corner Farm in Greenwich at 8:15 a.m.

Sunday, June 12, 2005 – Poplar Grove. Reg and Ruth Newell (902 542-2095) will lead a walk to see the spectacular Yellow Lady's-slippers and maybe some late Ram's-head Lady's-slippers (one of North America's rarest orchids) as well as other wildflowers unique to gypsum soils at Poplar Grove near the Avondale shore. This is a half hour drive and then a 20-minute walk in to the site, so bring a lunch and meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 10 a.m.

Saturday, June 18, 2005 – Blanding's Turtles. Brennan Caverhill will lead a field trip to see the Pleasant River population of the endangered Blanding's Turtle. This is one of three sites in the province with known populations and the most easily accessible, the other two being at Keji National Park and McGowan Lake. The area consists of a unique stream/meadow/bog habitat, accessible via an abandoned railway that runs directly through a network of wetlands in the working landscape of rural Pleasant River. Brennan will show us aquatic hoop net traps used to live-capture turtles, a radio telemetry demonstration, and if we're lucky, a radio-tagged Blanding's Turtle along with the turtles' overwintering and nesting sites. This is a wetland area, so if bugs bother you bring a bug net. Dress according to the weather, and if you'd like to get your feet wet and

wade out into the bogs, bring boots or waders as well. Meet at the Trinity United Church in Pleasant River west of Bridgewater on Hwy 208 where it intersects with the New Elm Road at 2 p.m. and plan on about three hours there. For better directions or more information, contact Brennan at <brennan.caverhill@acadi.au.ca>, 902 542-1624, or 585-1604 before May 1, or 585-1469 or 682-2371 after May 1. If you would like to continue on to Keji to spend the evening volunteering with the nest monitoring program (and perhaps have the chance to see a nesting turtle), contact Eric Alcorn at <eric.alcorn@acadi.au.ca> or 902 585-1721.

Sunday, June 19, 2005 – Little River Falls. Join Reg and Ruth Newell (902 542-2095) for a hike to Little River Falls. This is a short, easy hike to a very scenic location near Sunken Lake with lots of flowers and birds along the way. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 10 a.m. and bring a lunch to enjoy by the waterfall.

June 24–June 26, 2005 – Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (FNSN) Conference and AGM in Truro. See notice on page 28 for details.

Saturday, June 25, 2005 – The Old Wolfville Reservoir includes a large track of diverse forest habitats on Gaspereau Mountain. Ford Spidle (902 679-0233) will lead a tour through this area, which is being considered for some form of formal protection. Meet at the Wolfville Waterfront at 9 a.m. We should be back by noon.

Saturday, July 9, 2005 – Black Rock Hiking Trails. There is an extensive hiking trail system in the community of Black Rock on the Fundy shore. Reg and Ruth Newell (902 542-2095) will lead us over some of these trails to see the local flora and fauna. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 9:15 a.m. or the Black Rock Community Centre at 10 a.m. See <www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/trails/blckrock.htm> for more information about the location and trails. Bring a lunch to enjoy on the beach.

Wednesday, July 13, 2005 – Kentville Ravine. Reg and Ruth Newell (902 542-2095) will lead an evening walk to see flowers and ferns among the majestic old-growth forest of pines and hemlocks at the Kentville Ravine. Meet at the Wolfville waterfront at 6 p.m. or the Research Station parking lot in Kentville beside Highway 1 at 6:30 p.m.

BNS Executive Notes

Our editor has suggested that we initiate a new venture to keep members informed about what happens with BNS behind the scenes. The executive meets four times per year to deal with ongoing and new business. Here are some of the items of business we have dealt with over the past months:

- BNS participated in and donated \$500 to the development of the observation platform at Evangeline Beach, which opened in June 2004.
- We approved the donation of two \$50 prizes to the Valley Regional Science Fair – one each for Senior and Junior High levels. These prizes will be awarded for the first time in 2005.
- We donated \$150 to the Blue Beach Fossil Museum in recognition of its provision of field trips for BNS.
- We kept in touch with the Town of Wolfville about its discussions with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust to preserve the 750 acres of watershed property on the South Mountain.
- We maintained the Robie Tufts Nature Centre.
- We are in the early stages of developing a program in cooperation with the Town of Wolfville to include nature education as part of the Summer Recreation program.
- We approved a new method of recognition for our guest speakers by making donations to projects or groups of their choice.
- We continue to provide ongoing support and correspond with various groups that share our interest in the natural world and its preservation.

On behalf of the executive,
Liz Vermeulen, president

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I (ed.) wish to thank all the busy people in BNS who find themselves even busier helping us keep various functions going so smoothly: writers, organizers, the illustrator for her wonderful pictures, posties, programme committee, executive committee, field trip leaders, programme speakers, Acadia Print Shop staff for prompt production, calendar committee (now working on 2006). And many accolades to the unsung heroes and heroines who contribute in little ways that add up to a 101% job well done.

REQUEST FOR PHOTOS

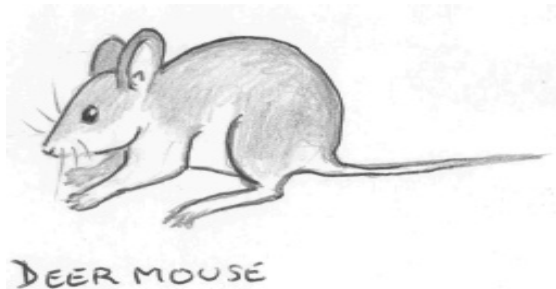
2006 BNS Natural History Calendar

Photo submissions are invited for possible use in the 9th edition of our society's Natural History Calendar. Submissions should be in one of three forms: colour negative, colour slide, or electronic (JPEG format, file size between 300 KB and 2 MB).

If only a print is available, it should be 5 x 7 (inches) or larger. Smaller prints are not suitable because of lack of detail. However, if you submit a colour negative, it would be helpful to include a small print for an initial evaluation of the photo. We will return negatives, slides, and prints, so include your telephone number and postal address.

Photos of natural history interest taken in Nova Scotia are preferred. Please do not submit 113 of your photos and expect the calendar committee to sort through them; submit no more than a dozen of what you consider to be your most suitable photos. Suitability involves technical quality (sharp focus, absence of under- or over-exposure), composition (main object of interest nicely positioned, absence of distracting background), and content (is it a photo that calendar users will enjoy looking at for a month?).

Send submissions anytime to Roy Bishop by mail (RR 1, Avonport, NS B0P 1B0) or e-mail <rg@ns.sympatico.ca>. Questions? Call Roy at 542-3992. Deadline: Labour Day, September 5 (That is when the calendar committee – Roy Bishop, Merritt Gibson, and Sherman Williams – begins to labour).



Wolfville Christmas Bird Count, Dec 18, 2004

Compiled by Ian Paterson

The Participants: Bush Beaters

George Alliston, Margaret Alliston, Peter Austin-Smith Jr., Sherman Boates, Larry Bogan, Soren Bondrup-Nielsen, Dennis Brannen, Gail Davis, Mark Elderkin, Trina Fitzgerald, Harold Forsyth, George Forsyth, Bernard Forsythe, Glenys Gibson, Jamie Gibson, Merritt Gibson, Pat Hawes, Tom Herman, Dennis Hippern, Dave Johnson, Patrick Kelly, Angus MacLean, Stella MacLean, Randy Milton, Terry Milton, Adele Mullie, Joe Nocera, Mike O'Brien, Mick O'Neill, Ian Paterson, Barry Sabean, Sarah Sabean, Dave Shutler, Peter Smith, P.C. Smith, Richard Stern, Elizabeth Stern, Phil Taylor, Bill Thexton, Brenda Thexton, Chuck Thompson, Jean Timpa, Judy Tufts, Rick Whitman, Sherman Williams, Jim Wolford, Barry Yoell.

Bushbeater groups spent 151.4 hours in the field: 97.5 on foot, 50.5 by car, and Larry Bogan logged 1.5 hours by bicycle! The field crews covered 841.4km: 171.9 on foot, 659.5 by car, and Larry went 10 km on his bike.

The Participants: Feeder Watchers

Agar Adamson, Jim Amos, Diana Anderson, Diana Bishop, Sharon Borden, Carol & Ron Buckley, Nancy & Scott Burbidge, Lana Churchill, Sandy Connelly, Chris Cox, Graham Daborn, Debbie & Jim Daigle, Pat Davis, Pat Dix, Betty Eaton, Paul Elderkin, Wendy Elliott, Mary Ellis, Val & Bob Flecknell, George F. Forsyth, Hilma Frank, Charlotte Harper, Eileen Harris, Sharon Harris, Lorna Hart, Avril & John Harwood, Pat Hawes, Heather & Terry Hennigar, Gail Herbin, Maxine Hill, Marg & Bob Horne, Isobel Horton, Winnie Horton, J.P. Huang, Lana Isenor, Sandy Kempton, Del & Clint (Mac) MacInnes, Janet MacWha, Ron Margeson, Shirley & Don Marston, Pat Martell, Jessie Martin, Rosaleen McDonald, Terry Murphy, Edna Mutch, Linda & Andy Nette, Nancy Nickerson, Linda & Terry Pearson, Dorothy Perkin, Mary Pratt, Ladny Richmond, Marg Russell, Linda Sacouman, Ruth Scott, Helen Shaw, Steve Slipp, Sandy Stevens, Brenda & Bill Thexton, Dianne Thorpe, Judy Tufts, Deanna & Eva Urban, Lynn (Kotze) Walker, Gertrude Waseem, Tami & Mitch & Neil & Harry Whiston, Jim Wolford, Jean Wood, Betty Yoell.

Feeder watchers spent a total of 107.3 hours watching 67 feeders.

The Birds

We counted 76 species, totalling 31,544 individual birds. [Note: CW indicates a species sighted during count week but not on count day.]

Great Blue Heron 9, Canada Goose 359, American Wigeon CW, American Black Duck 2,009, Mallard 452, Northern Pintail 2, Ring-necked Duck 2, Greater Scaup 2, Lesser Scaup CW, Common Eider 53, White-winged Scoter 4, Black Scoter 9, Common Goldeneye 18, Common Merganser 21, Bald Eagle 243 (adult 169, immature 69, unknown age 5), Northern Harrier 6, Sharp-shinned Hawk 4, Northern Goshawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 124, Rough-legged Hawk 4, Merlin 2, Ring-necked Pheasant 181, Ruffed Grouse 22, Bonaparte's Gull 1, Ring-billed Gull 17, Herring Gull 3,217, Iceland Gull 2, Great Black-backed Gull 999, Mourning Dove 800, Rock Pigeon 377, Barred Owl 2, Red-headed Woodpecker 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 7, Downy Woodpecker 122, Hairy Woodpecker 66, Northern Flicker 54, Pileated Woodpecker 20, Eastern Phoebe 1, Blue Jay 748, American Crow 2,541, Common Raven 203, Horned Lark 73, Black-capped Chickadee 1,328, Boreal Chickadee 13, Red-breasted Nuthatch 106, White-breasted Nuthatch 54, Brown Creeper 2, Marsh Wren 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 113, Hermit Thrush 1, American Robin 74, Northern Mockingbird 2, European Starling 13,278, Cedar Waxwing 26, Nashville Warbler 1, Pine Warbler 1, Palm Warbler 1, Common Yellowthroat CW, Yellow-breasted Chat CW, American Tree Sparrow 81, Chipping Sparrow 13, Savannah Sparrow 40, Fox Sparrow CW, Song Sparrow 367, Swamp Sparrow 5, White-throated Sparrow 73, White-crowned Sparrow CW, Dark-eyed (Slate-coloured) Junco 446, Snow Bunting 55, Northern Cardinal 3, Rose-breasted Grosbeak 1, Red-winged Blackbird 2, Common Grackle 1, Purple Finch 139, White-winged Crossbill 22, Common Redpoll 46, Pine Siskin 60, American Goldfinch 1,679, Evening Grosbeak 60, House Sparrow 421, scaup sp. 1, gull sp. 260, warbler sp. 1, Rufous-sided Towhee CW.

In 2003 we had the highest counts in North America for three species: American Black Duck (3,820), Blue Jay (1,078), and American Goldfinch (1,331). This year, the overall number of birds seemed lower than usually, but we were rewarded with some fairly rare sightings. Of note are the Lesser Scaup, Marsh Wren, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, Nashville Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Rufous-sided Towhee.

24th Annual Cyril K. Coldwell Eagles/ Raptors Count

by Jim Wolford

On Saturday, February 12, 2005, we were successful in getting a complete count for this nearly annual outing. The weather was pretty good (sunny and just below zero), but with a stiff, cold wind out of the west (most of our surveyors did their gawking from the comfort of their cars, with limited time in the wind). The setup is similar to a Christmas Bird Count, with each party having a designated area in eastern Kings County, but the observing is only for one hour, from 10 to 11 a.m. The area covered is similar to the CBC, but a bit further north, from Scots Bay to Black River Lake and Kentville to Avonport. We had 17 field parties and 35 total observers (a combination of Blomidon Naturalists, NS Department of Natural Resources biologists, and others from Acadia University).

This year we were extremely fortunate to have Mary Majka and David Christie from Mary's Point, NB, who accompanied Merritt Gibson.

We were very surprised at the extremely low results – the lowest in many years – especially since the numbers of eagles at Sheffield Mills during the first two Eagle Watch weekends (January 29-30 and February 4-5) were quite large (up to 100 in one spot). Just four days earlier I counted 99 eagles at the new feeding location at the north end of Middle Dyke Road at one time.

Observations

Bald Eagle: 217 (115 adult, 95 immature, 7 of unknown ages). Of the differentiated eagles (210), 55% were adult, 45% immature.

Red-tailed Hawk: 32 (one was a partial albino, or mostly white, individual, seen at the east end of Ridge Road, southeast of the Hortonville exit from Hwy 101).

Rough-legged Hawk: 1 (1 more was seen the next day).

Northern Harrier: 1 (seen by David Christie & Mary Majka).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 3.

Other items of interest: Only one flock of Horned Larks or Snow Buntings was seen at Grand Pre (15), eight Bohemian Waxwings were seen near Canning, and six Cedar Waxwings were eating high-bush cranberries at Avonport.

Postscript

The next day, Bernard Forsythe found 11 Short-eared Owls somewhere in the area surveyed (location not divulged). Bernard says that anyone can choose the right kind of day (i.e., overcast) and drive through suspected areas at dusk (or dawn), with periodic stops for scanning with binoculars, looking for the unmistakable short-ears in flight, like big long-winged moths, when they are hunting or courting.

History of the Eagle/Raptor Survey

It began in 1979, with only about 20 eagles, mostly in the Gaspereau Valley where Cyril Coldwell put out food for various scavengers, including the ravens he ended up studying for more than 20 years. His offerings of carcasses of various agricultural and trapped animals (cattle, pigs, horses, bobcats, beavers, poultry, etc. – and, later, coyotes) began in the mid 1960s.

The numbers of both Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks grew slowly and steadily until about 1991, when 148 eagles were counted. No count was done in 1992, but we were amazed in 1993 by the huge total of 442 eagles. We still don't know how to explain that sharp increase, but since then the totals have hovered around the range of 300–500, perhaps averaging more than 400.

In previous years our count has gone over 500 eagles twice: 525 in 1997 and 580 in 2000. And we have been in the low to mid 300s several times as well. Whether there is any upward trend still is anybody's guess, but I'll bet that both the Nova Scotia and total Maritimes populations are still increasing, thanks partially to the artificial feeding in the winter here in the Valley.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's version of the survey of non-dinosaurian raptors. Also thanks to Richard Hennigar and the Sheffield Mills Eagle Watch volunteers, who provided us counters with coffee and muffins this year at the Hall.

Another Postscript

This year's Eagle Watch at Sheffield Mills went very well for the Sheffield Mills community. They were blessed with four sunny days for the main two weekends, although the first Saturday was extremely windy and cold. Approximately 700 pancake and sausage breakfasts were sold during the first weekend, 1100 the second. Visitors included out-of-province people from Maine, North Carolina, Quebec, and PEI.

BNS MEETING

Show and Tell – January 17, 2005

by Jim Wolford

This year's version of our annual Show and Tell was scheduled for January 17, when a snow and wind storm closed not only all Kings County schools but even classes at Acadia. Unfortunately, even though we knew that people outside Wolfville would not be able to get to there, there was no good way to cancel the meeting.

As it turned out, 15 people did come, and four of them had presentations.

First, Richard Stern showed photos from a birding tour he and Ken McKenna did out of Albuquerque, New Mexico, including Spotted Towhee, Gray-headed Junco, Sage Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow. As a bonus, and by request, he also showed lots of excellent and informative (re identification) photos of various gull species, particularly the Halifax immature Ivory Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and a Slaty-backed Gull).

[We must remember not to let Richard start the presentations, because everyone else's photos pale in the shadow of his splendid shots.]

Next was David Dermott, our Nordic kayaker and winter-lover, who showed photos grouped under three categories: water, snow, and ice. Among his water shots were Eel Lake, Gaspereau Lake (including an island and weird pine tree), and shorebirds at Boot Island (Sanderlings and Dunlins).

Martin Thomas, a retired biologist and new member of BNS (moved from Bridgetown after a marine research career at Saint John), talked about a lovely new book he had written in 2004, *Natural History of Bermuda*. He showed us the book and several photos from it: a close relative of our Blue-eyed Grass; an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron (story about its being extirpated, then land crabs getting out of control, then importing night herons to successfully control them); Bermuda Petrel, or Cahow (slow recovery of highly endangered endemic bird); lovely Red-billed Tropic Birds (national bird of Bermuda, competes for nest-sites with Cahows); and the Marine or Cane Toad (now declining because of pesticides).

Martin has a few copies of his well-illustrated and informative book on the flora and fauna and their histories for \$60. Call him at 542-4484.

Finally, I showed non-digital slides of my trip with Pat in October 2004 to Arizona and New Mexico. My slides showed Sedona, Williams, the Grand Canyon (including recovering California Condors along the South Rim), and the Petrified Forest and Painted Desert National Park.



SEEN IN THE WILD
Winter Birds
by Mike McCall

A friend recently sent me a clipping from the *Economist* describing a study on bird migration published in 2003. The migratory information was intriguing, but what caught my attention was that a Manx Shearwater plucked from a mist net had been banded in 1953. I was aware that, discounting factors such as predation, hunters, famine, and accidents, a rough rule seems to be that larger birds lead longer lives than small ones. A Moluccan Cockatoo in the San Diego Zoo lived to at least 80, and a captive Bald Eagle in the US saw its 48th birthday. But a 50-year-old shearwater?

I guess we see what we see. This deep thought is prompted by the fact that I seem to see a hawk of one sort or another somewhere along my route from Halls Harbour to New Minas or Wolfville or when I venture north toward Canning, and I thought that, the deep snow notwithstanding, the winter population of buteos and eagles seemed to be greater than in recent years. This was not borne out in the results of the Cyril K. Coldwell Eagles/Raptors count on February 12, when observers counted only 32 raptors when they have come to expect a number between 70 and 140.

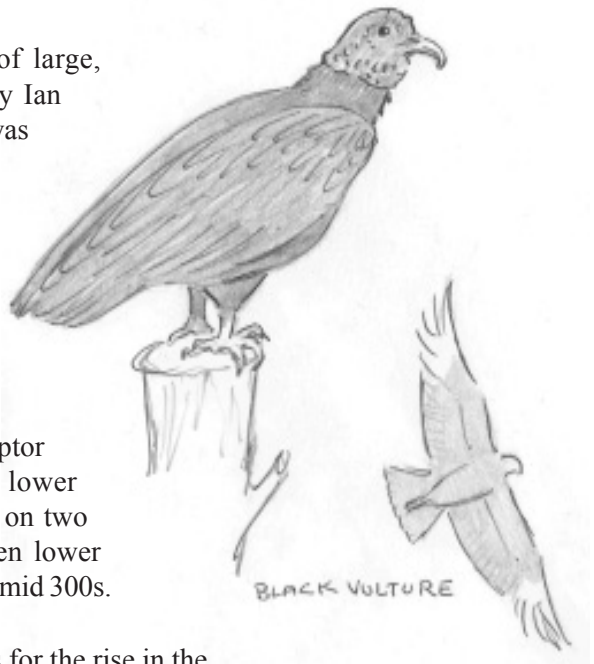
Early in January Dennis Brannen sighted an albino Red-tail on Wolfville Ridge with a clearly visible red tail and black primaries.

Jim Wolford reported two possible dark-phase Rough-legged Hawks – one near Port Williams and the other near highway 358 near Canard in early February – about the same time that Don MacNeill witnessed some avian warfare near Grand Pre. A Rough-legged Hawk carrying its kill was harassed by crows and sought to evade them by going to ground. A Red-tail happened along and, perhaps being as hungry as the Roughie, dropped in for a snack. The Roughie took off and the Red-tail, as the saying goes, ate his lunch.

A number of people have had a look at the Black Vulture that has been hanging around, initially, I think, at Grand Pre and subsequently to the

north and west. A small number of Turkey Vultures are seen regularly at Brier Island.

Staying with the subject of large, dark birds, in mid-February Ian McKay reported that love was in the air at Scots Bay as three young Bald Eagles put on an aerobic demonstration for the benefit of a (possible) female watching from a nearby tree. Bald Eagle numbers were surprisingly low on the raptor count: 217. This is much lower than the 500 plus reported on two previous counts and is even lower than the previous low in the mid 300s.



As most of us know, thanks for the rise in the number of Bald Eagles during the winter months can be given to poultry farmers who dispose of chicken carcasses near their barns. To further protect farmers against avian flu and many other bird diseases, however, it may be necessary to change the current guideline that allows carcass dumping at least 100 yards from barns. Mark Elderkin, the biologist for species at risk with the Department of Natural Resources, is redrafting the guidelines and will propose a distance of 3 km. Mark points out that this figure is for discussion and that it may well be changed in the course of discussions between Natural Resources and the poultry farmers and the Eagle Watch organizers.

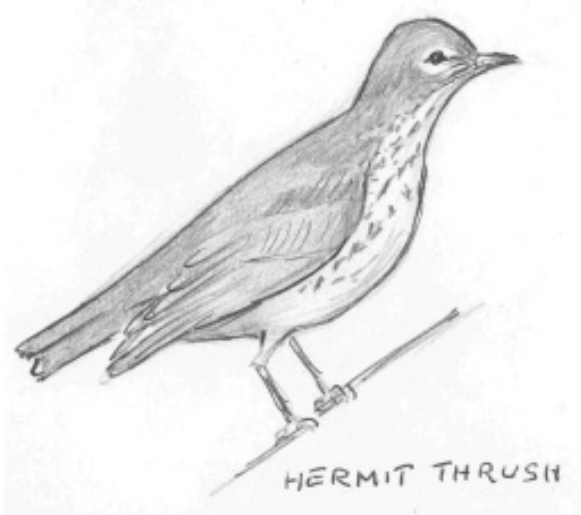
The birding column in the last issue of the newsletter brought news of many Red-bellied Woodpeckers around the province. Well, several of them didn't leave and have been seen around the county. As recently as 50 years ago the species was sometimes seen around New York City, but since then has gradually extended its nesting range north and east into Connecticut. According to Sibley, it seems to have stalled there, since it is reported only rarely in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, not reported

at all in Maine, and very rarely in Nova Scotia. That it might soon be a nesting bird in Nova Scotia seems unlikely. I wrote about bird longevity at the top of this column. It turns out that the Red-bellied holds the record for longevity for all North American woodpeckers: a 20-year-old banded bird was caught and released in North Carolina in 1967.

John Belbin reports frequently about avian life along the Fundy shore, a hitherto much-neglected birding area, methinks. He thinks the number of Long-tailed Ducks is uncommonly high, while numbers of Common Eiders are down. But there's a lot more going on. Here's John's list for Feb 10: Common Loon, Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter Red-breasted Merganser, Common Merganser, Common Eider, Red-necked Grebe, Thick-billed Murre, and Dovekie. This list is typical of John's frequent reports.

While Harlequin Ducks were often in evidence, on Feb 10 John wrote: "There were no Harlequin Ducks to be seen, but that does not seem to be unusual. They would have fed heavily at low tide when they can reach their prey much more easily in the rough waters, and with their high metabolism were probably resting somewhere on a rock. They must have real problems on very short winter days just spending enough time hunting in waters that are not too deep."

Happy spring birding.



NOTICE

North American Migration Count – May 14

The North American Migration Count is held each year on the second Saturday of May. This year's will be the fourteenth annual NAMC held in Nova Scotia. No participating fee is involved. Because May 14 is the latest date possible, we're hoping for good weather conditions this year, and more birds to count with a wider range of species flooding into our Maritimes domain. Now wouldn't that be a celebration to remember!

To all birders, feeder-watchers, and anyone interested in counting birds, please contact your county coordinator, or area representative, as soon as possible. If you don't know who that is, please contact me, the provincial coordinator, by e-mail or by phone (see below).

Although I will be retiring from the position of provincial coordinator after the 2005 spring count, I am pleased to announce that Hans Toom has generously volunteered to take over the position next year in time for the Spring 2006 count. He will make a fine, and very able, coordinator. Hans lives in Portuguese Cove, near Halifax, and has a great interest in the birds in our province. I know you will applaud his decision to take over this worthwhile project next year and will welcome him with the same invaluable support you have given me over the years.

It is impossible to express enough thanks to all my wonderful coordinators over the years. They work tirelessly and without complaint and bring such credit to their areas and to the final completed provincial tally. I am sincerely grateful to all the participants who have contributed to the count, and for their support and enthusiasm over the years. Thank you\.

Meanwhile, I will remain as county coordinator for Kings County.

Circle May 14 on your calendar NOW.

Judy Tufts

Wolfville

Tel: 902 542-7800

e-mail: <tandove@ns.sympatico.ca>

PARKS ARE FOR PEOPLE
Blomidon Provincial Park
by Jim Wolford

May 22, 2004 – On this brightly overcast day with pleasant calm conditions and 12–14°C temperature, seven participants made up nice nuclear group for our walk of perhaps 4 km. The walk started in the northeast corner of the campground and proceeded along the trail that parallels the cliff.

Animals observed along the way included a Snowshoe Hare in the campground, Ovenbird, Black-throated Green Warbler, American Redstart, Myrtle or Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy Woodpecker, Winter Wren. And someone heard a vireo.

The flora of the forest floor showed lots of evidence of the very late spring of 2004. Flowers included Purple (red) Trillium and Fly Honeysuckle. Hobblebush and Rosy Twisted Stalk were almost in bloom

In leaf were oodles of the rare wild leeks, and Ostrich Ferns, Christmas Ferns, etc.

There weren't many black flies, and lots of pollen was obvious (from conifers, I presume).

In the forest pond there were oodles of mature Fairy Shrimp (*Eubranchipus intricatus*) (males were redder than the greenish females with their egg-sacs at the bases of their tails), lots of Daphnia “water-fleas,” lots of mosquito larvae (wrigglers) and pupae (tumblers), beetle larvae, snails, seed shrimps, caddisfly larvae in cases made from plants, water mites, tadpoles (perhaps of Wood Frogs), and eggs of Yellow-spotted Salamanders (the latter clumps were greenish with symbiotic algae in the egg-envelopes).

Yes, this is an old report, but we didn't have space to include it last year, and we like to promote the Parks Are for People program. See the program item on page 9 for details of this year's field trip—ed.

For the second year in a row, I was surprised at the lack of predators in the pond and the resultant abundance of mosquito larvae and pupae. In most years, large ephemeral ponds by chance get populations of various kinds of predators, such as predaceous diving beetles (adults and larvae), phantom midge larvae, backswimmers, etc. On the other hand, not knowing what to expect in any one year keeps my interest up for this field trip or for any periodic sampling trips to ponds that I think I know well. Likewise, the fauna of ponds changes from week to week and month to month. A similar argument can be made for revisiting habitats like the forest floor along this park's trails to see the changes in flowering species, etc.

I have already told the Provincial Parks people to sign me up again in late May of 2005 for this very easy spring walk in the Parks Are for People program.



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BNS FIELD TRIP REPORT

Late Shorebirds

by Jim Wolford

September 25, 2004 – Today was perhaps too nice weather-wise, sunny and very warm. That plus the late notice resulted in only two keen participants, Doug Linzey and Patrick Kelly, who met me at the Windsor sewage ponds at high tide.

I had the only scope, and Patrick was trying to use his huge star-gazing 20X50 binoculars, difficult to hand-hold but steady on a car's top. We were able to differentiate about 120 Black-bellied Plovers (in every imaginable plumage from summer to winter), at least four dowitchers (probably Short-billed), about 10 Red Knots, perhaps 10 yellowlegs (mostly Lessers, I think, but a few Greater too), fewer than 10 peeps (at least one was a Least Sandpiper, the rest mostly Semipalmated Sandpipers), and a single Spotted Sandpiper. I tried valiantly to discover a few Golden Plovers among the Black-bellies; we found a few possible candidates, but just couldn't be sure enough to tick them.

Other birds present were 100+ Canada Geese, dozens of Black Ducks, perhaps a dozen Green-winged Teal, only a couple of Mallards, two juvenile Double-crested Cormorants, and the usual three species of gull (including quite a few Ring-bills, which have gotten quite common in Windsor over the past several years).

No hawks, falcons, or eagles showed up to disturb the peaceful high-tide scene during our 30–40 minutes there. (Later Doug saw a single harrier nearby on the north side of the St. Croix River.)

At the sewage ponds we also saw good numbers of Clouded Sulphur butterflies. We saw some pairs interacting, and later Doug saw one pair that consisted of one yellow and one white individual (latter a female?). Also a few unidentified dragonflies were active, along with the sounds of numerous grasshoppers.

Yes, another late report that we couldn't fit in last year—ed.

Then Doug showed me the nearby Shell Environmental Park, which is between Highway 101 and the St. Croix River, just north of the westbound on-ramps off Wentworth Road. This complex consists of open fields, marsh, swampy forest, and a pond adjacent to the river. We spotted Savannah Sparrows, goldfinches, and, along the pond edges, a Greater Yellowlegs and a Solitary Sandpiper. At one point both of the latter were having siestas less than a metre apart.

Later, from the Falmouth Connector ramp off Highway 101 west of the Windsor Causeway, I scoped the mud-flats north of the causeway salt marsh. I could see about 100 Black-bellied Plovers foraging on the flats immediately northwest of the salt marsh.

Much later, on my own, I visited Wolfville Harbour at low tide. As usual, there was a small assortment of shorebirds there, plus the usual ducks (mostly Mallards, and a few Blacks) and gulls (challenging Ring-bills with muddy-coloured legs and beaks). Among the shorebirds were three dowitchers (again, no-doubt, Short-billed), about 10 yellowlegs (mostly Lessers but also Greaters), and a single lingering Willet.



The Swifts Are Coming

The first Chimney Swift of 2005 was spotted in Houston, Texas, on February 21. Once again this year we will be plotting the swifts' movements northward over the next few months. Please let us know when you see the first ones in your area. Go to our web site: <www.chimneyswifts.org>.

NEEDED

Volunteer for Nature Federation Board

We need someone to represent the Blomidon Naturalists Society to the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists. The FNSN board is made up of representatives from naturalist groups across the province, and BNS has always been active in the federation. In fact, Larry Bogan is currently vice-president and Jim Wolford represents members at large.

The board does a fair amount of business by e-mail and gets together in various parts of the province two to four times a year, including the AGM (usually held in late May/early June). The focus is on serving local clubs and dealing with natural history issues at the provincial and regional level. If you would like to fill this position, please contact Liz Vermeulen <lvermeulen@accesswave.ca> or Mike McCall <mikemccall@ns.sympatico.ca>.

INVITATION

Meet Other Naturalists

The Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (FNSN) will be holding its annual conference and annual general meeting in Truro this year, on the weekend of June 26–28. As always, this will be a wonderful opportunity to meet and enjoy the company of naturalists from all parts of the province. And, as always, you will have the opportunity to hear some stimulating speakers and to pick and choose from a variety of local field trips.

Events (Friday reception, meals, talks, poster display, AGM) will take place on the NS Agricultural College campus. A very reasonably priced conference package will include accommodation and meals. Keep an eye on the federation Web site <naturens.ca> for details, which will be posted soon. Mark your calendar now, and we'll see you in the hub of Nova Scotia on June 26–28 for a great natural history weekend. For immediate information contact Claire Diggins by phone (902 825-6152) or e-mail <claire_diggins@hotmail.com> or Pat Hawes (902 542-9204), <phawes@eastlink.ca>.

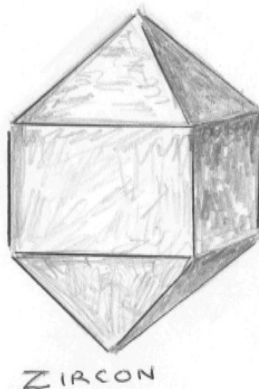
BNS FIELD TRIP REPORT
Acadia University Geology Department
by Jean Timpa

On Saturday morning, January 8, 2005, a fine number of BNS members turned up at the Acadia geology department for a tour conducted by Professors Elizabeth Kosters and Robert Raeside. On a damp, chilly morning we were also cordially greeted by hot coffee, tea, and Christmas goodies, which were much appreciated, too.

The walls of the geology department are thoroughly decorated with all sorts of unusual maps, charts, student posters, and case after case of rocks collected from various places all over the world and in our own backyard, representing the various geological time periods and various rock and mineral groups.

Our tour, in two groups, was supposed to take 45 minutes, and then we could go back and look at anything with which we wanted to spend more time. However, we asked so many questions that we barely got through the tour in the two hours. Dr. Raeside also showed us three thin-sectioned samples of rocks under microscopes, which gave us a whole new understanding of the tiny particles of minerals that make up rock.

My favourite thing to do in the geology museum is to hold the meteorite samples in my hand and realize how heavy and dense they are compared to most of our earthly rocks.



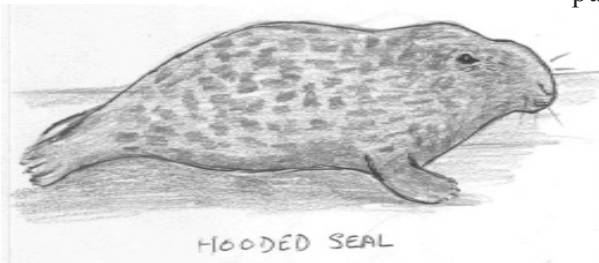
NOTICED
Urban Seal
by Jim Wolford

The February 18, 2005, *Advertiser* contained an article and photo by Brent Fox about a small seal found on Jones Road in New Minas (February 15, I think). Fred Sgambati's editorial mentioned another seal being found on Middle Dyke Road on February 17.

I recently contacted Brent Fox, and he had luckily saved five of his digital photos, which he allowed me to forward to Ian McLaren, along with my guess that Brent's seal was a yearling Harp Seal, not what was reported as probably a Harbour or Gray Seal pup.

Ian confirmed my guess, which was based mostly on former communications from Ian in the NatureNS e-mail forum about yearling harp seals being increasingly common at this time of year in Maritimes waters. Most of the young Harp Seal Nova Scotia reports are from the Atlantic shore, often associated with floating ice, and by Zoe Lucas and others on Sable Island.

Yearling Hooded Seals are also a possibility at this time of year, but are much less common and very different in appearance, apparently still showing the "blueback" appearance of bluish-gray (dark) on their upper parts and whitish below.



We also have a local record of a Hooded Seal pup in the Avonport salt marsh several years ago in March or April. This

was documented by Terry Murphy, who found and photographed the errant weaned pup, and me, when I saw the photo and recognized what it was.

BNS FIELD TRIP REPORT
A Murphy Field Trip
by Roy Bishop

As reported in the winter newsletter, a moderately bright comet has been crossing the evening sky. Comet Machholz was brightest early in January. It was then visible to the unaided eye under dark-sky conditions and made a nice sight in binoculars. On the evening of January 7 the comet passed near the Pleiades star cluster. Thus, an astronomy field trip was scheduled that evening at Grand Pre, with the next two evenings as rain dates.

Murphy's Law says that if something can go wrong, it will. All three nights were cloudy at the scheduled time (8 p.m.). The first evening was particularly frustrating because the sky was overcast right up until 8 p.m. However, within another half hour the clouds had disappeared, and Comet Machholz was a pretty sight next to the Pleiades in the star-studded sky. The leader of the field trip (RB) was the sole observer at Grand Pre.



ISSUE

Proposed Mega-quarry on Digby Neck

How will stopping the proposed Whites Point mega-quarry and marine terminal on Digby Neck help protect the North Mountain and its Bay shore in Annapolis and Kings Counties?

If a mega-quarry and marine terminal at White's Point in Digby Neck are approved, there may be a sad future for North Mountain, from Brier Island to Cape Split near Wolfville. This beautiful area could become heavily industrialized with numerous mega-quarries and marine terminals. Approval of the White's Point quarry could create a precedent, strengthened by North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) protections, for large-scale basalt extraction, for export, along the Bay shore of the North Mountain. This would almost certainly result in long-term, negative environmental impacts to the ecosystems on land and in the Bay of Fundy. It could decimate both the fishing and tourism industries, the two most profitable job sectors in this area. As word spreads of the potential loss of quality of life in our area, property (especially coastal) values could plummet.

The insatiable demand for aggregate in the eastern United States, coupled with the incomprehensible lack of any provincial coastal policy and availability of relatively cheap land prices, seem the major reasons that have brought the proponent, Bilcon of Nova Scotia, to our shores. Bilcon, part of a large American concrete company from New Jersey, intends to blast, extract, and ship upwards of two million tonnes of basalt annually from just this one project. The potential profit is astounding, and most of this money will leave Canada. It is no surprise that other companies have already been buying coastal land on Digby Neck and western Annapolis County on speculation. The majority of Digby Neckers, many groups and individuals in Digby and Annapolis Counties, and national and provincial groups are opposing this project.

From a handout prepared by the Partnership for Sustainable Development of Digby Neck & Islands Society.

Perhaps due to the location of the proposed quarry, most people in eastern Annapolis County and Kings County know little of this project and are unaware of its potential threat. A joint federal-provincial environmental review panel will soon sit to determine whether or not to recommend issuing the necessary permits. The ultimate decision will rest with the ministers of environment, both federal and provincial. The proponent has very deep pockets to hire experts and lawyers. Opponents to the project do not.

Considerable financial help is needed by the Stop the Quarry Coalition to finance a strong technical and legal defense. Please help us stop this project so we can protect our part of the Bay of Fundy and North Mountain and, as a result, your part as well.

For more information, please contact Marilyn Stanton, treasurer, Partnership for Sustainable Development of Digby Neck & Islands Society (902 834-2205 or <mstanton@ns.sympatico.ca>) or Jim Fisher, chair, North Mountain Preservation Group (902 532-7474 or <jwfisher@alumni.princeton.edu>).

Send cheques payable to Stop the Quarry to M. Stanton, Box 25, Sandy Cove, NS B0V 1E0.

For further background on Digby Neck, the proposed project, and the environmental panel review, please visit <www.savedigbyneck.org>.



ISSUE

Sanctuary and Wildlife Management Area Review

Twenty-six Nova Scotia wildlife sanctuaries and management areas are being reviewed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Recommendations include expansion or increased protection for some areas, removal of status from others, and the addition of several more.

Two Kings County areas are recommended for removal: Dewey Creek, near the Canard Poultry Plant, was originally established in 1982 for the protection of waterfowl habitat, and the Minas Basin Wildlife Management Area, a strip of land between Kingsport and Medford, was originally designed to protect habitat for migrating Canada geese.

The Southern Bight Minas Basin Wildlife Management Area is a new proposal for designation. It has the highest tides in the world, and hundreds of thousands of migrating shorebirds stop here during to fatten up on the invertebrates found on tidal flats. The feeding stop is a critical part of their annual cycle. The proposed wildlife management area will protect globally important populations of migratory shorebirds and their habitats. Activities around, and access to, roost sites and mudflats where birds feed will be limited seasonally to minimize disturbance to birds and degradation and loss of habitat. The southern bight has an area of some 23,500 ha, most of which is marine or estuarine water. It includes 3,938 ha of estuarine flats, 2,383 ha of marine flats, 500 ha of salt marsh, and 21 ha of beach. This is a very welcome addition to our area.

To learn more about the 26 regions of Nova Scotia and the review and evaluation process, see the DNR website: <www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife>.

To respond to DNR's proposal, you can e-mail <sanctwma@gov.ns.ca>, fax (902 679-6176), or write a letter to Sanctuaries and Wildlife Management Areas Review, Wildlife Division, NS Dept of Natural Resources, 136 Exhibition Street, Kentville, NS B4N 4E5.

What's In The Sky?

by Roy Bishop

New Moon: March 10, April 8, May 8, June 6

Full Moon: March 25, April 24, May 23, June 22

Spring begins: March 20 at 08:33 AST

Daylight Saving Time begins: April 3

Summer begins: June 21 at 03:46 ADT

Saturn and the Gemini Twins

Saturn was at opposition in January. Thus, by March Saturn is high in the south as evening twilight ends, conveniently positioned for viewing.

The two bright stars above Saturn are Pollux and Castor, a pair of first-magnitude stars in the constellation Gemini. Pollux is closer to Saturn than is Castor, both as it appears in the sky and in terms of its actual distance: Pollux is 34 light-years away, Castor 52. The light entering your eye from Saturn left that planet a little over an hour ago. The light from Pollux left that star in 1971, before the Blomidon Naturalists Society was formed, and Castor's light has been traveling since 1953, the year of Queen Elizabeth's coronation.

During April and May, Saturn shifts westward in the evening sky as Earth moves around to the opposite side of the Sun. During the summer months Saturn will be lost from view behind the Sun.

Jupiter Rules the Spring Sky

Jupiter is bright and unmistakable in the eastern evening sky during March, rising near the end of evening twilight. On April 3, Jupiter is at opposition and rises in the east as the Sun sets in the west. A small telescope will show the disk of Jupiter, a couple of cloud bands, and its four large Galilean satellites. Binoculars will also reveal these satellites when they are positioned on the east or west side of Jupiter.

The bright star below Jupiter is Spica, the brightest star in the constellation Virgo. Spica is 260 light-years away, so the light we see this year has been traveling since 1745, before Halifax was founded.

The Moon is near Jupiter on the nights of March 25 and 26, April 21 and 22, May 19, and June 15. Using Jupiter as a reference point, the day-by-day orbital motion of the Moon eastward across the sky will be readily apparent around these dates.

April 11: The Crescent Moon and the Pleiades

On the evening of Monday, April 11, the crescent Moon passes very near the Pleiades, a pretty cluster of a few dozen stars. Be looking by 9:30 p.m., low in the western sky, and use binoculars to best appreciate the beauty of this celestial arrangement. The dark part of the Moon will be illuminated by earthshine, sunlight reflected by Earth toward the Moon. Moonlight takes about one second to reach Earth; starlight from the Pleiades takes over 200 years. (If this paragraph sounds familiar, you read it before on the BNS calendar!)

Spring Galaxies, a Postal Address, and Spring Peepers

During the evenings of mid-winter and mid-summer, the Milky Way spans the sky. The summer Milky Way is brighter than that of winter because on an August evening the central part of our galaxy is in the sky. On a February evening our view through the galactic plane is outward, away from the center of our galaxy.

On a spring evening we look out of the north side of the galaxy, thus there are fewer stars in the sky than in winter or summer. However, there is also much less obscuring dust, so we can see much further, far out into intergalactic space. Although nearly all galaxies beyond our Milky Way system are too distant and faint to be seen with the naked eye, many of these galaxies are visible in a small telescope. The larger the telescope, the more galaxies can be seen, each one appearing as a pale fluff of light floating in the dark of intergalactic space.

In the spring evening sky, beyond the constellation Virgo (near where Jupiter is located this year), the nearest large cluster of galaxies resides. The center of this cluster is “only” 50 million light-years away, so close that dozens of its galaxies are visible in a small telescope. Our own Milky Way galaxy happens to be a member of this cluster, along with twenty or so nearby galaxies known as “the Local Group.” Our galaxy and the Andromeda galaxy are the two largest members of the Local Group. A complete postal address for someone living in Nova Scotia would read:

(Name)

(PO Box #), (Town), Nova Scotia, Canada (Postal code)

Earth, Solar System

Orion Arm, Milky Way Galaxy

Local Group, Virgo Cluster

Universe

Each spring I take a telescopic tour through the galaxies of the Virgo cluster. Often on such evenings the faint sound of spring peepers wafts across the dark moist fields into my observatory. There is something profoundly uplifting about a universe in which the warmth of one star in one galaxy on the edge of the Virgo cluster has made possible the existence of Spring Peepers. Their serenade on a May night is the perfect background music for a tour of intergalactic space.

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Blomidon Naturalists Society

2005 Membership Fees and Publications Prices

Each member of the Blomidon Naturalists Society receives four issues of the BNS newsletter annually. Because BNS is a registered charity, the society issues receipts for all donations. The membership fee itself is not tax deductible. Members may also join the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists through BNS and will receive FNSN News, the federation's newsletter. FNSN membership is not tax deductible.

Please send cheques or money orders in payment of membership fees and for publication purchases to

Harold Forsyth
10120 Highway 1, RR 2, Wolfville, NS B4P 2R2

No.	Membership classification	Price	Total
_____	Individual adult	\$15.00	\$ _____
_____	Family (number of family members _____)	18.00	\$ _____
_____	Junior (under 16 years)	1.00	\$ _____
_____	Federation of NS Naturalists membership	5.00	\$ _____
_____	Tax-deductible donation		\$ _____
_____	2005 BNS calendar (\$12 + postage)	13.50	\$ _____
_____	<i>Natural History of Kings County</i> (\$10 + post.)	12.00	\$ _____
_____	Annotated checklist of Kings County birds	6.00	\$ _____
_____	Blomidon Naturalist crest	5.00	\$ _____
	Total		\$ _____

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Sources of Local Natural History

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Information	Source	Office	Home
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	Jim Wolford	585-1684	542-9204
Astronomy	Roy Bishop		542-3992
	Sherman Williams	542-3598	542-5104
	Larry Bogan		678-0446
Birds – General	Bernard Forsythe		542-2427
	Richard Stern	678-4742	678-1975
	Gordon & Judy Tufts		542-7800
	Jim Wolford	585-1684	542-9204
	Jean Timpa		542-5678
Butterflies & Moths	Jean Timpa		542-5678
Fish	NS Dept of Natural Resources	679-6091	
Flora – General Fungi	Ruth Newell	585-1355	542-2095
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Mammals	Tom Herman	585-1469	678-0383
Rocks & Fossils	Geology Dept Acadia U.	542-2201	
Seashore & Marine Life	Sherman Bleakney		542-3604
	Jim Wolford	585-1684	542-9204
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