

BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, No. 3

September 1976

Brief Report on the Society - Meetings, Outings

Larry Bogan

Since the last BNS Newsletter we have had two evening meetings, and two successful outings.

In September Dr. Roy Bishop told members of BNS and the public of "Universal Illusions," interesting aspects of seeing and new ways to look at our environment. Then in November, Anne Linton, a masters student at Dalhousie in Biology, projected us on to Prince Leopold Island in the Arctic to describe the fascinating behaviour of birds that she helped study during a five month stay there last summer.

The August outing: Sherman Williams led individuals and families along the dikes from behind the NSPC toward Grand Pre. Although we did not make Grand Pre we saw more than I expected for late August. Of course there was plenty of the two common salt marsh grasses, Spartina alterniflora and Spartina patens, with their very small white and purple flowers. Then in the same habitat we saw goose tongue, sea lavender, and seaside plantain. There were many Savannah Sparrows buzzing away. After comparing bay berry bushes, alfalfa, and other flora on the freshwater side we returned from a very worthwhile stroll. I had walked these same dikes many times and had never seen so much.

The September outing: There was a tremendous turnout on this beautiful Sunday morning for a rewarding tour of the Hixon Bluff area. Roy Bishop and Sherman Williams led us down over the bluff at low tide to investigate sponges, hermit crabs, eels, and other marine life visible in the low tide region. On the way, there was opportunity to pick up shale with fossils and follow the tracks of an early dinosaur in the mud-turned-to-stone. A mirage over the water formed toward Cape Blomidon, giving the impression of a perfect mirror floating on the water out in the bay. As we were reluctantly leaving the shore, the Gypsum boat being pushed by the little tug boat churned by.

A new Executive was formed and elected at the November meeting. For 1976-1977 the officers are:

President:	Larry Bogan	542-3033
Vice-President:	Bernard Forsythe	542-2427
Secretary-Treasurer:	John Timpa	542-5678
Programme Committee:	Rachel Erskine	542-2388
	Roy Bishop	542-3992

Continuing as Newsletter Editors are Jean Timpa and Roy Bishop.

Please don't make these people do all the work in keeping our society going. If you can help in some way - suggest programmes, give a programme, lead an outing, suggest an outing, write an article, draw illustrations, run a gestetner, provide publicity - call one of the officers. It also helps to get to know each other.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks are extended to Roy Bishop and Anne Linton for providing our evening programmes this fall, and to Roy and Sherman Williams for leading field trips this past summer; also to all those who have made this Newsletter possible. We think it is one of the best yet, although late!

BNS Newsletter Deadline - December 21, 1976!

Please don't wait until December 20! It's too close to Christmas. Let's have another fat, action-packed issue. Surely you have seen, or heard something interesting nature-wise recently you could share with all of us. Send your surprises now to: Dr. Roy Bishop, Avonport, N.S. or to Mrs. John W. Timpa, Box 1382, Wolfville, N.S.

THE BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

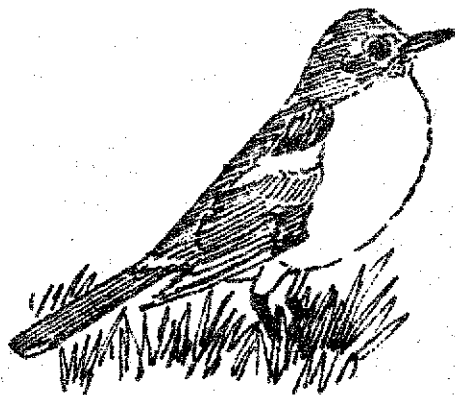
is published quarterly by the Newsletter Committee of the Society

Co-editors: Jean Timpa
Roy Bishop

Art and
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Membership in the Blomidon Naturalists Society can be obtained by writing to the B.N.S. c/o John Timpa, Secretary of B.N.S., Box 1382, Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0
Yearly membership fee is \$2.00.

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



A Friendly Robin

Robie W. Tufts

On August 2 (1976) a neighbour brought me a young Robin which had fallen from its nest. Aside from its tail, which had scarcely begun to sprout, it was well-feathered but wholly unable to fend for itself. I was told that the bird's parents were ignoring its insistent calls for food, though they were regularly attending to the needs of those in the nest. If such was the case the parents alone have the answer, for such behaviour on their part is difficult to explain.

The bird was cared for to the best of my ability and developed rapidly. Its response to my approach clearly indicated that it had accepted me as its parent, all of which is normal routine and not worth recording. But during the interim of its ultimate release (Aug 16) and its final departure (Aug. 21) there were no less than three instances of this bird's behaviour that I feel are worthy of mention. What their real significance was, if any, I do not know and shall leave it to my readers to theorise as they may.

By August 16 its general appearance was that of a fully grown, speckle-breasted young Robin. It was released that morning in my garden wearing an official leg-band and was seen a number of times during the day. It appeared to be finding food on the ground, but I was unable to determine just what it was picking up; definitely not earthworms for the sun-baked soil had sent them to lower levels where they were out of reach of all surface predators. Twice during that day it came running to where I was sitting in my lawn-chair and with mouth agape and wings fluttering, begged for food. This I was able to supply immediately having anticipated such an emergency.

That evening, quite some time after all normal birdlife in the garden had subsided, I was again sitting in my garden when to my amazement the bird appeared at my feet. It was silent and definitely not begging. I spoke to it quietly and leaning forward was permitted to pick it up. It sat on my hand momentarily while I stroked it gently as I had done many times during its stay with me, then flew, alighting in a thick thorn tree where it probably spent the night. I looked at my watch and noted that it was close to nine o'clock (ADT). I had placed a dish of blueberries on the lawn and several times during that day and during those which followed, I notice it feeding there. I had counted the berries and found that its food requirements were met when it had eaten three. Incidentally they were of the cultivated variety being considerably larger than the wild ones.

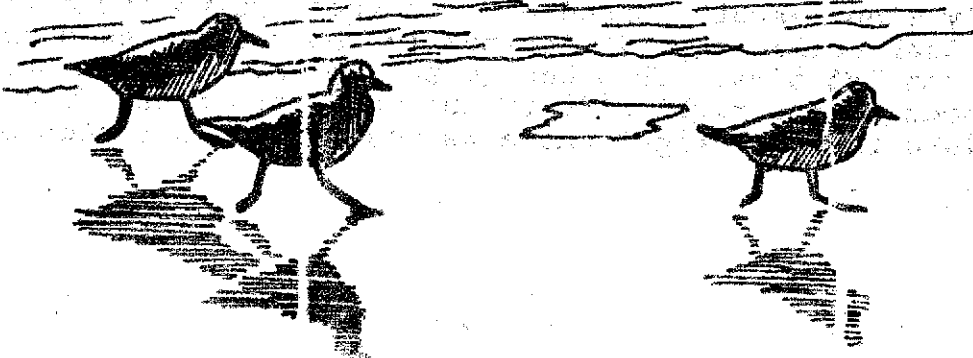
In the evening of August 19 I was again sitting in my garden. The Robin had been seen a number of times on the lawn during the day, but there had been no intimacies. Darkness was approaching, and as I was about to retire to the house I was again surprised and no less delighted to have my little friend appear on the lawn within a few yards of where I was sitting, his leg-band clearly betraying his identity. I left my chair and walked slowly toward him whereupon the bird nestled in the grass and permitted me to pick it up. For some moments it sat quietly on my open palm while I stroked it as usual. Suddenly it took off to its favourite shelter in the thorn tree.

My Robin was not seen on August 20, and no blueberries were taken from the dish that day. Naturally I assumed that he had left the area for greener pastures, and I wished him well.

My wife had been away from home during the period just reviewed but returned on the 21st, whereupon I told her what had happened with

respect to our pet. That evening about eight o'clock we were both sitting in the garden when suddenly she exclaimed - "Look, there's our little friend." The bird had come again at dusk. Silent as before, it hopped toward us. I stood up and speaking in a low voice stooped to pick it up, but when my hand was within a few inches it took off and alighted a few feet above me on the edge of the garage roof, soon to leave for his nightly roost in the thorn. It is now October 20, and we have not seen him since.

During these three late-hour visits there was, as above cited, not the slightest evidence, by way of behaviour, that the bird came hoping to be fed. Nor should it be overlooked that these return visits occurred after the fully-developed bird had severed its domestic ties and had, for some considerable time, been on its own and among its own in the wild state. Such being the case one naturally asks, to what urge from within was this little creature responding, or what was the impulse which motivated its return to me, and why always at dusk?



In closing I might add that many times during the period of the bird's helplessness I feared that after its release it might never learn to adapt to the wild state, but it now appears that my worries in that respect were wholly unfounded.

Editor's note: When Dr. Tufts brought this article to me, he also told me of seeing in his backyard on July 18 what he is very sure was a Tropical Kingbird. It landed on a line about 25 feet from him, stayed awhile, flew to a tree and returned to the line. Dr. Tufts noted the bird was about 9 inches long, with very prominently forked tail, bright yellow breast, and dark back, but it appeared to have grayish sides which is not characteristic of any of the 20 birds which Godfrey has in the Ottawa collection. This bird wisely left the scene before Dr. Tufts could collect it, so the sighting must remain a hypothetical one, especially in view of the grayish sides.



Kitty Cat Play

David Somers
Bear River, N.S.

When: October 1, 1976 between 5:30-6:00 p.m.

Where: The logging road that continues beyond the 4th Lake Dam (Digby Co.), past the gravel pits

Who: Everett and Ray Trefrey and myself

Description:

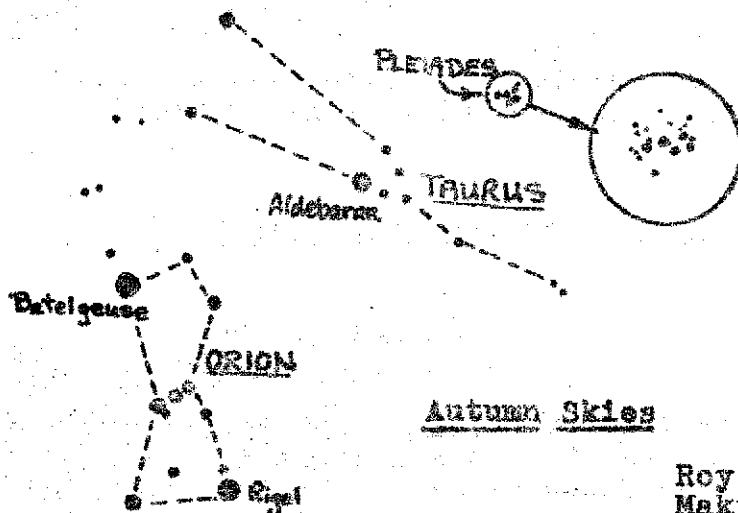
We had been out partridge hunting all day. We left Bear River at 8:00 a.m. and went to the 4th Lake area down Long Tusk Lake, Riverdale, and New France. On the way home we decided to continue on past 4th Lake, and it was as we came over a rise in the road that Everett noticed what appeared to be an animal injured in the road, kicking its feet in the air as if in pain. As we drove closer we could make out the shapes of two animals. As they came out of each other were they, that we were able to drive within twenty feet of them. Now we could all see that they were a pair of wildcats. Over and over they went, first one on the top, then the other. This was not the usual type of fight one would expect from two cats with screeching and fur flying but more like two kits from the same litter playing games, except that these cats were almost full grown (somewhere around 15-20 lbs., maybe a little more).

It was only when Everett turned off the truck so we could watch them that they took notice of a difference in the noise around them and noticed us for the 1st time. Then one jumped up and ran down the road and into the woods on the right side of the road; the other just looked up and jumped into the bush right where he was on the left side of the road.

We just sat there momentarily. We were all talking excitedly about what we had seen when the cat on the left side of the road jumped up on a rock to have one last look at us for a few seconds before disappearing into the woods for good.

All that excitement and me without my camera, not even the pocket camera I usually carry, "just in case," on days when I am not expecting any photographic opportunities!!

Thanks, Dave, for such an unusual and interesting report. We think you have a first for the Newsletter—a story about mammals.



Roy Bishop
Maktomkus Observatory

There are many signs of the approach of winter. Among the more familiar ones are the rapid decrease in the hours of daylight, the gradual build-up of a cool dampness outdoors, the coloring and fall of the leaves, transient flocks of warblers and robins, and the cries of bluejays and crows from frosty hillsides. Less familiar but no less poignant to the knowledgeable beholder is the appearance of certain stars in the eastern sky during crisp fall evenings. This part of the sky is rather empty of interesting features during the late summer, but with the frosts a singularly unique asterism, like a wraith of Halloween, casts its misty spell from the eastern evening sky. This is the Pleiades, a small cluster of stars, none very bright, and only moderately larger in area than the full Moon.

Known by various names, the Pleiades have been among the most noted objects in the history, poetry, and mythology of the heavens. References to them appear back over at least four millennia. In the book of Job (38, 31) we read

"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?"

Some Grecian temples were oriented toward the directions where the Pleiades either rose or set. In Greek mythology the Pleiades were the seven daughters of Atlas and are sometimes still today referred to as the Seven Sisters. The figure seven corresponds to the usual number of stars visible to persons with good eyesight, although only six can be distinguished under less favorable conditions. With a dark sky and excellent vision, however, nine or more stars can be glimpsed.

Primitive tribes often knew the Pleiades, and those involved in sea faring sometimes made use of them for navigation. Several cultures have referred to this covey of twinkling stars as representing a flock of birds, while sometimes it is called the Little Dipper. This latter name is misleading, however, as the official Little Dipper (or Ursa Minor) is a much larger but less distant constellation in another part of the sky. Other peoples have associated the appearance of the Pleiades with the end of the season for sea voyages, or the beginning of the period of cold, sickness and death.

The light we now receive from the Pleiades left this cluster a few decades before Galileo first used a telescope to study the heavens. Such is the distance to this cloud of stars. Although only seven or so stars are visible to the unaided eye, photographs reveal several hundred together with nebulous wisps of glowing dust near the brightest stars, a feature that can be glimpsed through a good telescope on a transparent night. The Pleiades are very young as stars go, being only

a few tens of millions of years old; however, this is long enough to ensure that during the entire period that man has roamed on Earth, the misty light of the Pleiades has been part of the night.

Although the first of the stars of winter, the Pleiades are only the vanguard of a sparkling array of constellations. Following the Pleiades into the eastern heavens are the Hyades, Auriga, and then blazing Orion with his two dogs. An added bonus this fall is to be found just below the Pleiades. That bright, yellowish, star-like object is the giant planet Jupiter. Its disc and three or four of its moons can be glimpsed in a steadily held pair of binoculars. These globes and constellations are also full of ancient lore (to be found in books) and personal meaning (to be found in many cold, dark nights remote from the lights of man), but that is another story.

Tennyson probably penned the best description of the Pleiades, and it is with these lines I close:

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

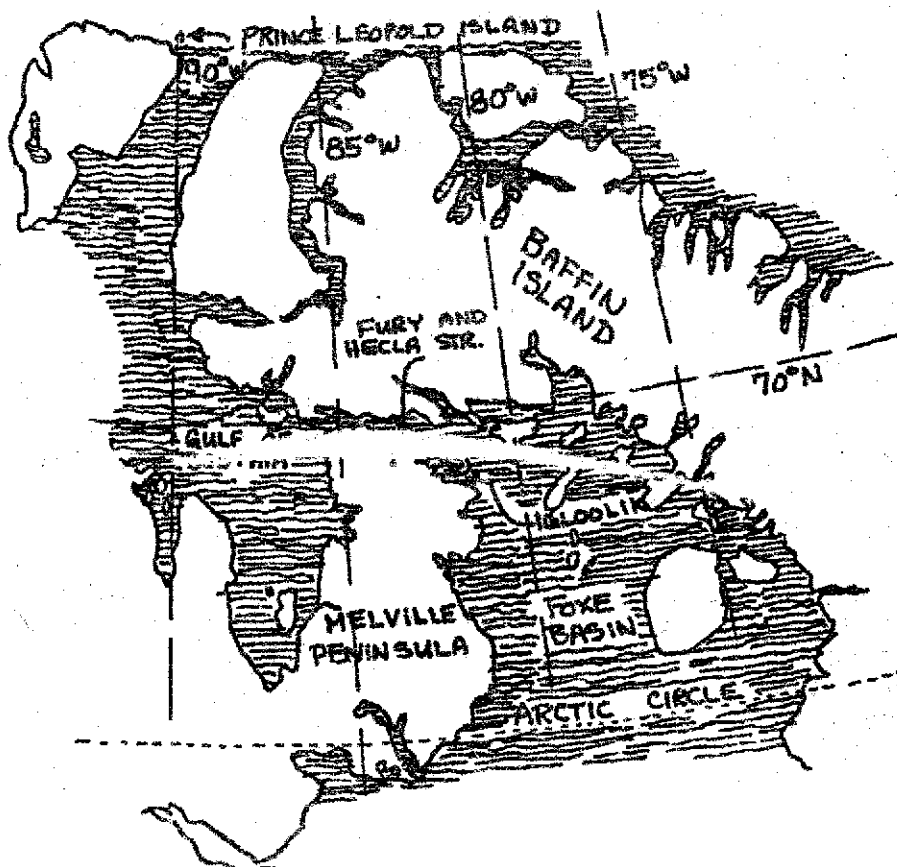
LIFE IN IGLOOLIK, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Jennifer MacPherson

Igloolik is a small isolated settlement of about 750 people situated in the shelter of a gradual slope on the beach of a small crescent-shaped island in Foxe Basin at the mouth of Fury and Hecla Strait. The Inuit name of this location is 'ipiajuk', or pocket, for the settlement is located in the pocket of the island, which is about 14 miles from tip to tip and no more than about three miles wide at any point. The island has little vegetation. Summer reveals mosses, lichen, willows, grasses and the tiny incredibly beautiful Arctic flowers all growing close to the ground. More obvious though on our arrival 3 years ago were the expanses of broken rock and gravel.

John and I came with our daughter Emma to Igloolik to teach in the large modern school. Although our expectations were moderated by the information of several friends who had spent various amounts of time in the North, we could not escape something of the childlike attitude towards this sparsely populated area of Canada - the rather mystical quality of the North being 1000 miles straight up in the clear dark starry sky, or of its inhabitants, strong and stoic surviving against impossible odds. Perhaps there is some truth in these ideas, but I think it more likely they were born of a lack of information and understanding.

Igloolik's contact with the outside is mainly by airplane. It is only in the fall that ships arrive bringing supplies for the stores, fuel oil and gas, building materials for houses and other buildings, and a variety of other equipment. In the centre is the Hudson Bay Store and a cluster of warehouses, behind which is the R.C.M.P. office and houses, and then the large new school.



On either side of the community is Roman Catholic and the other Anglican, the result of intense competition between the two churches for converts beginning in the 1920's. When families began to move permanently into Igloolik, in the 1960's, houses tended to be built near the missions of the two churches, effectively separating the community. Other buildings, the Nursing Station, Northern Canada Power Commission, and a variety of garages and warehouses are scattered about the settlement. Behind the settlement is the Eastern Arctic Research Lab which is available for scientific research.

The Igloolik airstrip is behind the settlement on the height of land, and a road of about two miles has been built since the airstrip brought year-round air service to Igloolik about 6 years ago. Prior to that time planes could only land when ice or water conditions made it safe. Now the airstrip is used in the summer, and occasionally when great amounts of snow make keeping the strip and road open difficult, an airstrip will be built during the winter on the ice. This year exactly that situation has occurred and we are now using an ice strip built long enough for an expected Hercules to bring in a new generator some time during April, 1976. (The power situation in Igloolik is not perfect. Our second Christmas in Igloolik was spent in the middle of a 36 hour power failure which was caused by complications following a fire. Since then increasing power demands have been difficult to keep up with, and we experience frequent power failures especially during the dark period of December and January.)

When we arrived in Igloolik we were met by the Settlement Clerk; however there is no longer such an official. That position has been eliminated since Igloolik has attained Hamlet status. For Igloolik Hamlet status essentially means that the Hamlet Council has control of the financial organization and administration of municipal services. This includes water delivery, sewage and garbage disposal, snow removal and road maintenance. The Hamlet Council is elected by residents, and is entirely Inuit, as is their employee, the Secretary-Manager of the Hamlet.

The truck that transported us when we arrived in Igloolik in August of 1973 was one of two trucks in the settlement, the other being a truck of ancient vintage which was used for garbage pick-up. There were several tracked vehicles and tractors for water and fuel delivery, and for transportation during the winter. Now there are so many vehicles in Igloolik I'd be hard pressed to name them - trucks, tractors, a van, four-wheel drive vehicle, even a canary yellow Pinto - and of course snowmobiles in quantity.

The housing situation which exists in Igloolik is varied. Government employees (teachers, social worker, local government worker, Dept. of Public Works personnel etc.) are provided with furnished housing at subsidized rents which are very low, especially when compared with the actual cost of maintaining the houses. Until very recently this housing was only available to those people who were recruited elsewhere to come to Igloolik to work, and effectively this meant that the white residents lived in better quality, low cost government housing, and that Inuit residents, even if they were government employees, were not entitled to this housing. It has only been during the past year that locally hired government employees, and therefore Inuit, have been entitled to government housing. However, there is not enough housing for all government employees so it is the locally hired employees who are at the bottom of the list.

It is true that all people in Igloolik pay rents that are low in relation to the cost of housing (as low as \$6.00/month is paid by some Inuit who have little financial means of support), but the difference in quality of housing is great. Although the imposing two story houses are no longer being built in Igloolik, generally speaking government housing is sound, well-insulated with pressure water systems, furnaces, reasonable amount of storage space, appliances including washers, dryers, etc. The first houses built for the Inuit in Igloolik were a variety of small one room shacks 8' x 16' and 10' x 20'. These 'houses', some of them 20 years old, continue to be occupied, in some instances by families with 3 and 4 children. Presumably the idea was that the Inuit would want small housing units as they would more closely correspond with the traditional iglu and carngmaq (a small round sod house with a roof made of skins). The fact that traditional housing was impermanent was at that time not considered. In the past if an iglu became objectionally dirty, one simply built a new one, or moved the tent, whatever the case. Traditionally, too, the Inuit did not produce the kind or quantity of garbage they are able to today. In any case the housing being built for the Inuit is generally increased in size, and are much better planned. Very soon families will move into several new 4 and 5 bedroom houses, built for large extended families who wish to live together (as often happens).

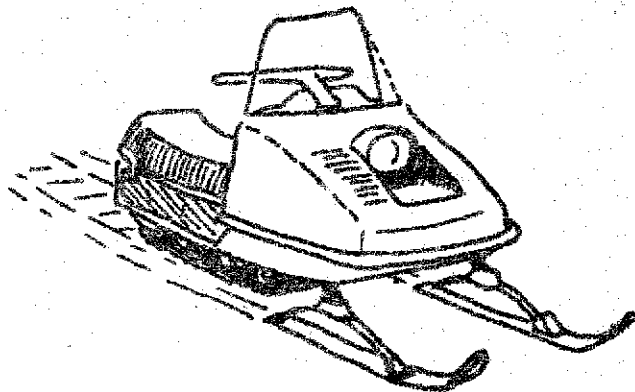
There are a variety of services administered by the Hamlet Council. They oversee the contract for water delivery. This is a constant problem, the solution to which is always just around the corner - after sealift when some item of new equipment will arrive and make water delivery reasonable. During the

summer water is collected from several shallow lakes behind the settlement, and during that time it is possible to adequately supply the community with water. Water is in short supply during the winter - a problem which is more severe for the Inuit residents both because they have such small water tanks, and water tends to be delivered to the white residents before it is delivered to the Inuit. One of the solutions to the winter water problem is to cut ice blocks at even the shallow lakes and make them available for people to either collect at the lake or from some central location in the settlement. This works well. It provides better quality water (not so many foreign beings talking about), but the quantity is not adequate for clothes and body washing over a long period of time. One must remember that many Inuit residents are faced with clothes washing by hand rather than machine, and that when baths are taken it must be at the school or the Adult Education Centre, because bathtubs are not supplied in houses.

Another service administered by the Council is garbage disposal. Basically this means the disposal of 'honey bags' which are heavy-duty garbage bags tied with wires and placed outside houses. When they are full, they are collected and disposed of in the dump (which is periodically graded to hide the refuse). Several years ago we had an epidemic of infectious hepatitis, and it was suspected that its spread was due to this method of sewage disposal; however, no better method has been instituted.

All the municipal services are complicated by equipment breakdowns, which do not happen infrequently. It is impossible to employ someone who could service the variety of equipment here, and consequently most equipment lasts only two or three years. The dump is filled with the skeletons of many, many vehicles.

The employment situation in Igloolik this year is not quite normal. In addition to a variety of jobs at the Bay, the Co-op, with the Council and Housing Association, Sealift last fall (1975) brought several large buildings to be constructed (a new Nursing Station, community hall, four bay garage), and this has meant that many men who would otherwise be hunters and trappers have been regularly employed for most of the winter. For some time the people of this area have been tied to a money economy which has meant that at some time during the year they must work for money, or they must hunt or trap animals that have skins of commercial value. There are few people in Igloolik who carve for a living, although there are some who carve to earn some additional money (not many carve from artistic or mystical inspiration - it's a job, for money). Whether or not a person is employed, the men hunt, primarily for caribou either on Melville Peninsula or Baffin Island, but also for seal, walrus, whale, a variety of birds, and fish. Although most people buy some food from the store, country food is favoured, and few people could imagine getting along without it.



In order to hunt, most families own at least one snowmobile, a machine that must be replaced about every two years and now costs a minimum of about \$1000.00. This, as with a car, is only the beginning of the expense. There is gas, oil, and spare parts for repairs which are frequent. The snowmobile is essential. The population of Igloolik is now so large that hunters must travel widely to find adequate amounts of country food.

Igloolik boasts about ten or twelve dogteams, but these teams are simply too slow for the distances that have to be travelled. Even if dogteam owners hunted and trapped with their teams full time, it is nearly impossible for them to support their families on the returns.

Life in Igloolik can be very expensive. Inuit families might purchase a minimum of supplies from the two stores, the Hudson Bay and the Igloolik Co-op. They might purchase tea, canned milk, sugar and the makings of bannock, or they might purchase a variety of foods which cost anywhere from a third to several times higher than similar items cost in the South. People, who for one reason or another do not have country food available, are committed to enormous food bills for their often large families. Fortunately the traditional system of sharing within families continues.

Most white residents make annual orders for groceries to companies in the South. These orders arrive on Sealift and are much less expensive than buying locally. Inuit residents rarely have enough money at one time to make this sort of purchase.

Clothing a family is another enormous expense. Footwear is generally the traditional kamik. Otherwise the traditional skin clothing is out of the question for life in the settlement. The makings for a parka of duffel and Grenfell cloth, which is windproof and quite warm, cost \$50.00 even for a child, and can be much more for an adult. Often a child will wear out two parkas in a winter. Many people have taken to purchasing the ready to wear parkas from the store because they are cheaper, but they are not nearly as warm. Inner clothing, which is not available in very good quality, is also expensive. The water situation makes keeping clothing clean nearly impossible, so many people use clothing until it becomes too dirty when it is discarded.

Last year Igloolik voted to reject television which could have begun late in 1975. Instead the people asked for radio. It was felt that the cultural intrusion of television would be too much at this time. Beginning shortly before Christmas we have had CBC radio via Anik (which also provides us with telephone connection with the South), and a community radio station here operates for about an hour a day to give community news. These activities, and very active church groups make life very sociable.

The school, Attagutaluk, is very large. It has a large library, gym, and tech centre (home economics and shop) surrounded by classrooms for grades Kindergarten through 9. We are most fortunate to have in Igloolik three qualified Inuit teachers. With these teachers, and three Inuit classroom assistants it is possible to offer the first three years of school in Inuititut. Practically no child comes to school speaking any other language than Inuititut, except the few white children that live in Igloolik for a short time. Next year there will be a fourth qualified Inuk. English is taught as a second language, and an effort is made to provide a curriculum that is relevant to the North - at least until the middle years of school when English becomes the language of instruction.

Since writing this article late last winter, John, Jennifer and Emma have moved a bit further north to Clyde River where John is principal of the school. In a letter of Oct. 4th, Jennifer writes of their new area: "We've been able to take a few more pictures of local vegetation - especially blooming flowers - having been here for the better part of the summer. School having started July 21st, we really only had weekends to go hiking about. We were especially delighted with some mushrooms we found. We really had a few fine days - mostly cold and foggy or rainy. After our short vacation we were back in time to see the ice go out - although it didn't go too far, and has hampered hunting - and the supply ships."

Time Out to Re-Create the Human Spirit

Edgar B. McKay
Bear River, N.S.

September 8 was a clear, warm day with patches of small, assorted clouds high in the blue sky. It was a good day to go "up the brook" for a walk with camera and fishing rods and with eyes watching for birds and even lowly mushrooms. Woody Davis and I have little real knowledge of either birds or fungi, but we both enjoy looking at and listening to what is around us. A fishing trip is more than just catching trout.

On this day in particular nature seemed to be in one of her most attractive moods. A few maples were starting to show color, patches of fern along the stream reflected gold in the pools, and there were no black flies, mosquitoes, or wood ticks. The trout required some patient enticing, but ten in all were taken, the largest nearly a foot long. As well we caught glimpses of a hermit thrush, a pigeon hawk at close range, an immature bald eagle, besides hearing numerous chickadees and bluejays. A large assortment of mushrooms and other fungi spotted the forest floor.

At mid-afternoon we walked leisurely down the uneven, rock path beside the stream, pausing frequently to look and listen and rest. After carefully balancing our way across the granite rocks on the old river bed, we soon completed the last half mile of the partially overgrown old log road to the N.S.P.C. power plant at the head of Harris Lake on the East Branch of the Bear River.

While I prepared the car for the drive back to the village, Woody walked slowly down the road and around to the front of the power house looking for a possible sighting of an eagle. (This is often a favourite spot for seeing the big birds.)

I eased the car down over a few yards of stunted alders and pot-holes to a point on the parking lot to the west of the power house. There was Woody pointing excitedly skyward. I got out of the car to look. There were four bald eagles - two mature birds and two immature birds - flying in a group - sometimes soaring in great swinging circles ever upward, then dipping down or sliding sideways and rising again without apparent effort. The show went on for several minutes, and it seemed throughout that one immature bird kept with an older bird all the time. The flashes of the two mature birds were pin-points of bright light against the blue sky.

Finally, one older bird flew to what has been for some time a favourite eagle perch in a towering pine about two hundred yards from us. The other birds moved off down the lake and out of view.

We stood silent, watching the big bird on the roost as he turned his head from time to time. At last Woody broke the silence: "How could anyone ever kill anything as beautiful as that?"



Field Trips - - Acadia University Biology Dept.

Cyril Coldwell

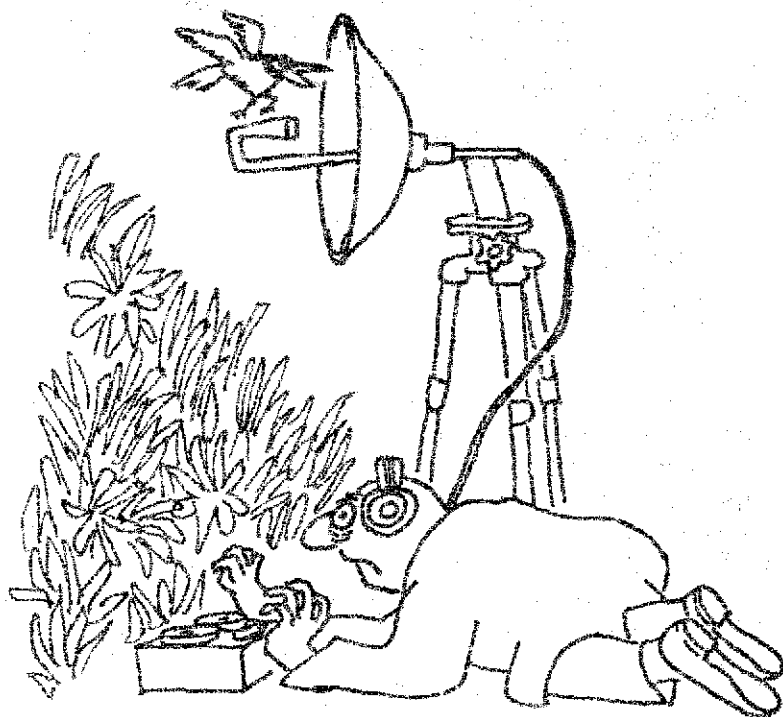
During September and October some members and staff of the Acadia Biology Department made three field trips to off-shore islands, two to Brier (Digby Co.) and one to Grand Portage (Shelburne Co.). Bird counts and mist net banding were conducted on all three expeditions. During the first trip on Labour Day weekend about 30 fall warblers were captured and banded, but no rarities were observed. A few Sharpshins were following the birds, and one immature female was caught in the nets. After photographing, the bird was released. The highlight of the day was the pelagic trip, conducted by the Nova Scotia Bird Society, at which time a large whale put on about a half hour performance within 50 yards of the observation boats. Birds observed at sea were: Phalaropes by the hundreds, 1 Fulmar, 2 Puffins, several Sooty and Greater Shearwaters, 1 Marsh Hawk, 2 Guillemots and 2 Broadwing Hawks along with the usual Black-back and Herring Gulls.

On the next trip late in September, migration appeared to be in full swing. Flocks of from 10 to 50 Broadwing Hawks could be seen circling in the sky over the island. Sharpshins, Pigeon and Sparrow Hawks were in evidence in large numbers and kept the Flickers in a state of agitation. About 100 birds were banded. Rarities recorded were several Field Sparrows and one positive sighting of a Prairie Warbler. An Immature Bald Eagle was observed harassing a Herring Gull in the harbour. An Immature Peregrine Falcon gave the shore birds at Pond Cove a nervous few minutes, and as it flew over a headland made a pass at a bunch of Crows which caused them to scatter in all directions.

At Grand Portage Island a White-eyed Vireo was captured and identified. This proved to be a first record for Nova Scotia. Also two Grasshopper Sparrows were positively identified. This bird is really quite rare for the province. A Wilson Petrel was observed feeding close inshore which seemed to be a bit unusual for this wide ocean wanderer. On the boat coming home an adult Peregrine Falcon was seen circling one of the small islands in Shag Harbour. The black facial mask was plainly visible when looked at through binoculars and scopes. This brought the fall Peregrine count to two individual birds, which is very encouraging news in view of their rapid population decline along the eastern seaboard in recent years.

Closer to home and earlier in the season, two visits were made to Boot Island here in Minas Basin. The first trip on May 18th was highlighted by the sighting of a Parasitic Jaeger, normally a bird of the very far north. A return visit during the first week of July resulted in the following nest count: 25 Great Blue Heron, 93 Double-crested Cormorants, 105 Great Black-backed Gulls, and 712 Herring Gulls. 3 abandoned Pheasant nests were also found, quite possible discouraged by the Gulls.

At least one other unusual bird visited our area this year. An American Avocet, a common bird of the West, appeared around September 12 and stayed around the abattoir near the causeway of the Canning River for about 10 days.



A Recipe -- Bird Pudding!

from Miss Louise Daley, the "Bird Lady"
of the Digby Courier

"Try out" 2 lbs. of rough suet (beef or lamb, not pork)*
Add:

- 1 cup oatmeal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. corn meal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. peanut butter

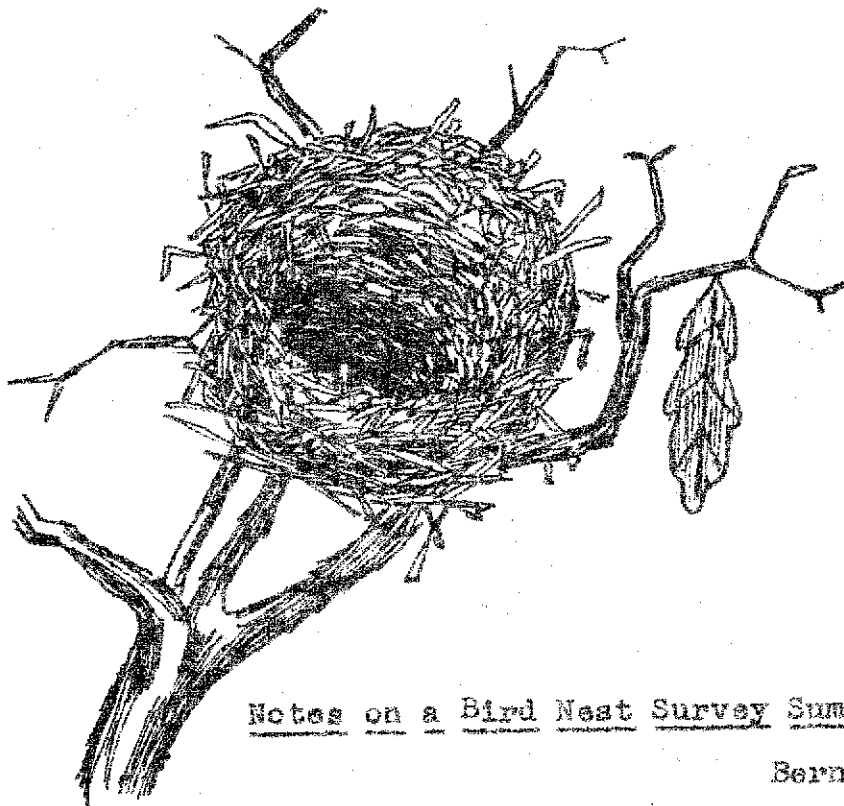
Mix well, harden (in refrigerator or out where it's cold). Pour into half a coconut shell (sawed in half to form a basket.)

Mrs. Edgar B. McKay of Bear River and Orono, Maine adds bird seed also to this recipe, and instead of using the coconut shells, hardens the mixture in pint plastic containers such as cottage cheese or yogurt would come in. The "cakes" are then removed and placed in plastic mesh bags in which onions come from the store and then hung in a tree.

From Mrs. Clara York of East Millinocket, Maine a slightly different version:

- 1 c. rolled oats (raw)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. corn meal
- 2 c. crumbs cut up fine (any kind)
- 2 T. peanut butter
- Bird seeds
- Mix with melted fat.

* Pork fat is supposed to be too rich for our feathered friends, thus Louise has cautioned against its use. However, Woody Davis made the following observation in our March, 1976 Newsletter (Vol. 3, No. 1): "I note that birds and squirrels prefer bacon fat and ham and pork better than beef fat." I know he has been afraid of making them sick, but so far has noticed no casualties, and he knows his "flock" very well. Do we have any bird nutritionists in the audience who can really settle this argument? After all pork fat tends to be cheaper and more readily available if it will truly be alright to use?????



Notes on a Bird Nest Survey Summer of 1976

Bernard Forsythe

Again this year I recorded bird nesting information for the Maritime Nest Records Scheme. For me this is a very rewarding hobby, not only for my own interests, but also that others will benefit from the records. Also several other local birders visited some of my nests with me. I filled out a total of 125 nest cards representing 38 different species of birds.

The season started on April 17 with the discovery of a Crow's nest containing 4 eggs. The young flew from the nest on June 6. My last nest was that of a Goldfinch spotted while I was painting my house on Aug. 4. Five young birds left this nest on Sept. 9.

On May 11 I was surprised to see a Long-eared Owl perched on a limb of a dark Spruce. Suspecting a nest I spent the next three afternoons looking and on May 14 a Long-eared Owl flushed from an old empty Crow's nest. By May 24 the nest contained 4 Owl eggs. By June 18 there were 4 young of various sizes in the nest. As the young grew larger the old nest began to fall, so I tied it to the branches with bailer twine. The three largest young survived and were out of the nest by July 14.

An old dead Spruce stump was found that contained a Flicker nest 11 feet from the ground, and 6 feet above that was the nest of a Kestrel. The tenants ignored each other, and both raised successful broods.

One has to be careful around the nest site so as not to scare off the adults or lead predators to the nest. However, I was amazed at the bravery of a pair of Boreal Chickadees. These little mites would fly at my face as I tried to check the young.

Cowbirds are becoming a serious problem in my area. This year I have found their eggs or young in 14 different nests. Species involved were Robin, Swainson's Thrush, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Redstart, and White-throated Sparrow. In most cases the result was disastrous for the host species.

On May 21 a Song Sparrows nest was found on the ground containing 4 eggs. When I revisited this nest on May 25 the adults had deserted, and only 2 eggs were in the nest. Taking a closer look I found a hole in the bottom of the nest. Lifting the nest, I discovered a tunnel leading from the nest in the dead grass, and there were the other 2 eggs unbroken in the tunnel.

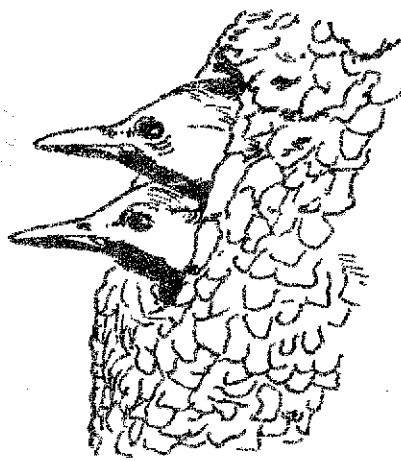
Because nest observing is time-consuming, most of my nests were found near my home on Wolfville Ridge. However I did locate several nests of interest on the South Mountain. One was that of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in a gravel pit near Lumsden. The nest fledged 4 young on July 15 and was located in topsoil that was hanging over the edge of the pit.

On June 15 I found a House Wren singing and carrying nesting material into a hole in an old stump near my home. This was very exciting, because the nest of a House Wren has not yet been found in Nova Scotia. By June 22 the Wren was also carrying material into a nest box 200 feet from the first nest. Although he sang continually, no female appeared, and I last heard him on the evening of June 23.

One challenge of my hobby is to locate nests of species I have not found before. This year a Mourning Warbler nested near my home again. Again I was not able to find the nest, but I saw the male feeding its young on July 3. I can hardly wait until next summer in the hopes of finding its nest.

Following is a list of this years nests:

<u>No. found</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>S=successful; F=failed</u>
1	American Kestrel	S
1	Ring-necked Pheasant	S
2	Spotted Sandpiper	1S;1F
1	Long-eared Owl	S
3	Belted Kingfisher	2S;1F
2	Common Flicker	2S
1	Hairy Woodpecker	?
1	Eastern Kingbird	F
1	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	S
3	Traill's Flycatcher	3S
2	Eastern Wood Pewee	1S; 1F
3	Bank Swallow	1S; 2F
2	Barn Swallow	2S
1	Blue Jay	F
6	Common Crow	5S;1F
2	Black-capped Chickadee	2S
1	Boreal Chickadee	S
5	Gray Catbird	3S;2F
21	American Robin	11S;9F;1?
3	Swainson's Thrush	3S
2	Veery	2F
1	Cedar Waxwing	S
2	Starling	2S
1	Red-eyed Vireo	F
4	Yellow Warbler	3S; 1F
4	Chestnut-sided Warbler	4F
1	Common Yellowthroat	S
7	American Redstart	1S;5F;1?
3	House Sparrow	2S;1F
2	Red-winged Blackbird	1S;1F
14	Brown-headed Cowbird	4S;10F
1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	S
1	Purple Finch	F
2	American Goldfinch	1S;1F
1	Savannah Sparrow	S
2	Chipping Sparrow	1S;1F
4	White-throated Sparrow	1S;3F
11	Song Sparrow	7S;4F



For an account of Bernard's first year of birdnest counting see BNS Newsletter Vol. 2, No. 3, September, 1975, p. 2 and 3, Birdsnesting, by Rachael Erskine; for a description of the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme see BNS Newsletter Vol 3, No. 1, March, 1976, p. 8 and 9, Look at the Birdie!? Now Count Them !!!

Monarch Butterfly Migration in Nova Scotia

Harrison F. Lewis, Sable River, N.S.
 from his "Outdoor Chat" column which
 appeared regularly in the Shelburne Coastguard

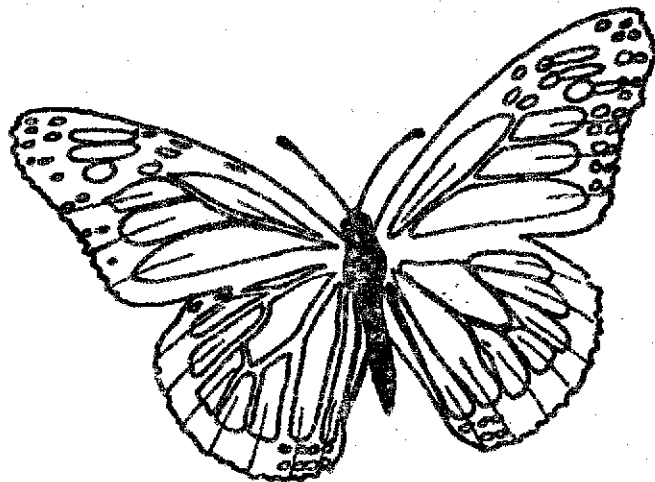
The celebrated southward migration of the monarch butterfly was evident on Cape Sable this month. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Smith, who are resident there, write about it as follows;

"On the 8th and 9th (of October) we seemed to be on the route of the monarch butterfly migration. Hundreds were in sight all day, both days, drifting on the light breeze, occasionally lighting on the grass. At suppertime on the 9th a number settled around the house, particularly the sunny southwest corner by our kitchen... About 100(at least) spent the night around the various buildings. We all admired the handsome monarch colours, the effortless floating flight. I wonder how many reached their southern destination after they set out across the sea."

This butterfly migration seems to have passed almost unnoticed on the mainland of Shelburne County. Mrs. Donald Robertson, writing from her home in Shelburne, says, "On October 7th a very large and beautiful monarch butterfly came to the dahlias to feed."

We wish we had more explanation of the occurrence of such a large number of monarch butterflies in autumn migration in Nova Scotia. The larvae or caterpillars of this insect are reputed to make the leaves of the milkweed their staple food. Milkweed is rare in Nova Scotia. It seems likely either that monarch caterpillars in Nova Scotia feed to a large extent on some other species of plants or that monarch butterflies produced farther west, perhaps in Quebec, drifted to Nova Scotia before turning south.

Editor's note: Dr. Lewis sent this article to me a number of years ago, perhaps 6-8, and unfortunately neither of us noted on the paper in which year this particular flight occurred. The lead article of the August 1976 issue of National Geographic is a summary of years of work by Univ. of Toronto based Dr. Fred Urquhart on the Monarch butterfly, finally climaxing recently in the discovery of the wintering grounds in the Sierra Madre of Mexico.



\$\$\$ Cheaper Birdseed Anyone? ?? \$\$\$

Helen Walker of 91 Palmetter Avenue, Kentville (678-3532-mealtimes are best) is interested in contacting a number of people who regularly feed the birds in the wintertime and use large quantities of seed. She estimates she uses 800 lbs. of seeds, both mixed and sunflower, at least. She hopes to be able to accumulate enough seed poundage, or perhaps even tonnage that a much more reasonable price can be offered to everyone. Anyone interested, please call her immediately so arrangements can be made soon.

The Association of Outdoor Nova Scotians

Begun in 1975 the AONS is hoping to bring together individuals and societies that are concerned with the betterment of the quality of life for all Nova Scotians. We should give serious thought soon to having the BNS join, but in the meantime if there are any individuals interested, the AONS executive have asked that their membership information be passed along:

Individual Membership (any Nova Scotian or resident of Nova Scotia)	\$5.00
Youth Membership (under age 16 years)	1.00
Group Membership (group or association)	20.00
Associate Membership (Non-resident of N.S.)	5.00
Sustaining Membership (Contribution in any amount)	
minimum of:	25.00

