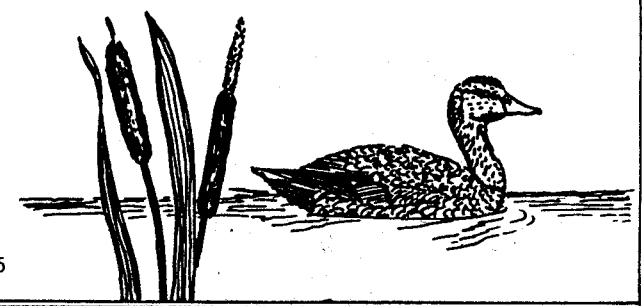


L. Bogan

BLOMIDON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY ... NEWSLETTER ...



VOLUME ¹²~~13~~
NUMBER '3
SEPTEMBER 1985

SOCIETY NEWS

BNS FALL - WINTER PROGRAMME

MONDAY EVENING MEETINGS: All of these meetings will start at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in room 244 of the Beveridge Arts Center at Acadia University. All are welcome to attend, and we encourage you to bring non-members with you.

1. October 21 - Dick Brown of the Canadian Wildlife Service and author of Voyage of the Iceberg will present a talk with slides on icebergs. Our annual general meeting will also be held to elect a new executive and to set dues. It will be time to renew for next year so remember your wallets.
2. November 18 - Zoe Lucas will give a presentation on Sable Island, a place where she has spent a great deal of time studying the wild horses, dune erosion, the lichen, etc.
3. December 9 - (Please Note that this is the second, not the third Monday of the Month!) Wildflower Night. Please bring your favorite wildflower slides for showing or favorite wildflower books for displaying.
4. January 20 - Rick Penny on Nature Photography. Rick brings expertise to from the Camera Corner in New Minas.
5. February 17 - Naturalists' Night II. This is the night to bring all your other nature memorabilia and slides (excluding wildflowers). More details will appear on the programme in our December Newsletter.

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The BNS Newsletter is published on equinoxes and solstices.

Editors: Jean Timpa and Larry Bogan
Art and Production: Larry Bogan
Distribution: Lana Churchill and Brenda Thexton

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

from the BNS constitution

FIELD TRIPS: All times are given for meeting at the Gym Parking Lot of Acadia University, unless otherwise noted.

1. October 12, Saturday at 8:30 a.m. (or at the corner of Rt.1 and Rt.360 in S. Berwick at 9:05 a.m.) - A canoe trip on a lake or river of the South Mountain to observe the Fall colors, birds, etc. Led by Larry Bogan. If very windy or raining, the trip will be held on the 13th.

2. November 16¹⁷, Sunday at 1:30 p.m. A general hike to see everything and anything. Led by Tom Herman. We will be hiking in the Moore's Falls area which is south of the 101 in back of the Kentville Ravine.

3. December 21, Saturday: Christmas Bird Count: please plan to join us for one of the most interesting excursions of the year. So you don't know your birds - never mind! Team up and help out some of us who do. We'd like your company and help keeping the count, carrying identification books, etc. If you are interested in being assigned an area or team, please contact Peter Smith at 542-2201 ext.354 or 542-5998 or Jean Timpa at 542-5678. We'll also try to have Peter at the next several meetings, especially at the December one to finalize plans. If the weather should be worse than atrocious, the count will be postponed until the next day, Sunday, December 22.

4. January 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 (Thursday thru Monday) Observation of Halley's Comet. 6:30 p.m. at the Roy Bishop's observatory in his home. Roy will be showing you the returned comet on one of these nights. You can join him in observing on any one of these dates when the skies are crisp and clear (no haze or clouds). Meet at his home on the Bluff Road in Avonport. Take exit #9 from the 101 and procede past L.E. Shaw School; his home is at the first bend in the road past the second railroad crossing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our gratitude to those who have helped out with BNS functions these past few months: Rachel Erskine for her continued help with publicity and refreshments; Roy Bishop for his stimulating talk on Halley's Comet to begin our new lecture series; and to our field trip leaders during the summer; David Hope-Simpson, Larry Bogan, and Jim Wolford.

...BNS NEWSLETTER DEADLINE...

-DECEMBER 21-

Please plan to give our Newsletter a Christmas present by contributing to the next issue. Don't get caught in the Christmas rush; please send your observations or articles to:

Jean Timpa,
P.O. Box 1382,
Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0,

or hand them to her at a meeting or field trip.

BLOMIDON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Membership and renewal dues will be set for the 1985-86 season at our annual general meeting, October 21. If you cannot be present at this meeting to pay these dues, please contact Jean Timpa at 542-5678 or the above address and she will be able to give you the name and address of our new treasurer.

SECOND ANNUAL ROBIE TUFT MEMORIAL AWARD

At our September meeting Paul Fairclough of Cambridge Station was presented with the Robie Tufts Memorial Award. Paul received a copy of Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds and a years membership in the B.N.S. Our Congratulations to him and our thanks to the other eleven entrants for participating.

SAVE YOUR ONION SKINS

The next time you peel an onion, consider setting aside the dry, brown, outer skin for Karen Casselman. She uses the to dye wool and needs more. Place them in a bag and give them to her at a meeting or outing.

MORE THAN DUES NEEDED FOR THE B.N.S

During the period January through June 1986, the artist, production manager, and co-editor will not be able to work on the B.N.S. Newsletter. Some of you members will have to volunteer to do that work for at least the first two newsletters of 1986. Some of you can type, some you can draw, trace, or copy drawings for filling space with illustrations, some of you can lay out the copy for submitting to the printer. This would be a good opportunity for anyone to learn how a newsletter is put together. Please let Jean or Larry know before December and then you can help on that issue so you will know what to do for the March and June 86 issues. It is quite a pleasing feeling to see your designs and efforts appear as 200 copies our popular newsletter.

----- FIELD TRIP REPORTS -----

SHORELINE GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP- JULY 21, 1985

Pembroke and Cheverie, Hants Co.

by David Hope-Simpson
Wolfville, N.S.

How and how far do members of the BNS want to be briefed on a geology field trip on a brilliant Sunday morning? It is not easy to summarize briefly the regional settling of our fine coastal exposures. The excellent "Geological Highway Map of Nova Scotia" compiled by Duncan Keppie and others, gives in a broad outline of Nova Scotia's geological history going back some 700 million years.

A party of about 20 of us drove on highway 215 to the iron bridge over the Kennetcook north of Brooklyn. It was low tide and the ripple-marked sands of the river bed were seen to have been actively spread laterally on heavy deposits of the tidal flat on the inside of the bend. By contrast, a lack of sediment, cliffs and exposed rock surfaces on the convex, cutbank side of the meander bend showed that erosion dominates over deposition.

We next went to the shoreline cliffs east of Pembroke near Walton where we could see the exposure of dark shales and fine sandstones of the Horton Group. The silts and sands of this Group were deposited some 340 million years ago, filling in the intermontane basins. Complex geological processes have since folded and faulted these rocks into fascinating shapes. Impressions of tree-stumps, driftwood, rootlets, mudcracks and ripple-marks can be seen on the rocks. Farther East the Horton Group was buried beneath unfolded thick beds of the weakly cemented gravels and sands of the Wolfville Formation. The latter was formed in the late Triassic Age 200 million years ago. The bouldery deposits were washed in from the south by powerful, though intermittent, braided streams; the climate at that time being tropical and perhaps somewhat arid. From the beach, this huge, thick slab could be seen clearly resting on the folded Horton rocks. The Wolfville beds dip gently towards and beneath the Blomidon shales and North Mountain basalt flows that compose Cape Blomidon, 20 kilometres to the northwest.

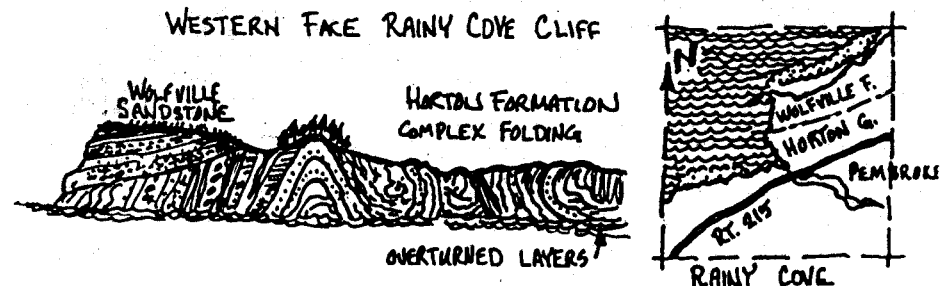
At lunchtime we were invited by Karen Casselman to "desert and coffee" at her artistic and beautifully situated home at Cheverie. We enjoyed so much the delicious chocolate cake, blueberry pie and other goodies lavishly spread before us, that there was some reluctance in continuing our field trip.

We next visited the Whitehead anhydrite (calcium sulphate) exposures on the shore just below the Cheverie United Church. Shorebirds including eiders, cormorants, and a sharp-shinned hawk gave some relief from rocks, rocks, rocks and mud, mud, mud.

Brilliant weather, exquisite colour, and good companionship made for a good day.

A vote of thanks to Karen Casselman and the car drivers.

(The Geological Highway Map of Nova Scotia may be obtained for \$3.50 at the Nova Scotia Museum or Bookstore)



SKY OBSERVING TRIP - AUGUST 7, 1985

by Larry Bogan
Cambridge, N.S.

As with all field trips, the weather makes the difference and we were blessed with the best, dark, clear skies possible. In the dark it is difficult to count heads but my estimate is 20 to 30 persons standing under the stars at the Wolfville Ridge Stile Park that fair, late summer evening.

We located and traced out many constellation from the familiar Cassiopeia and Big Bear to the less obvious Delphinus and Hercules. But the most interesting object in the sky was silvery Milky Way which stretch from northeast to the South. The telescopes were used to show some of the many nebulae and star clusters embedded that star cloud that is our galaxy: the Logoon Nebulae, the Star Clusters M-11 and M-22 among others. Our neighbor, the Andromeda Galaxy was up and visible in binoculars as well as the telescopes. With the dark sky we could see the star cloud of its disk as well as its brighter nucleus.

Those who brought binoculars were pleased to discover that they could see many of the interesting star clusters, and nebulae in the summer sky. We hopped among the stars and observed the double cluster in Perseus, M-6 and M-7 in Scorpius, the double star of Mizar-Alcor, and others.

The Perseid Meteor Shower was a only few days away and we were rewarded with several bright meteors that drew "aaahhs" from some observers. Jupiter was the only bright planet up and we were able to see its four brightest satellites as well as the several bands on its surface.

We could have stayed all night but alas other duties called and by 11:00 p.m. we had all drifted away to our homes.

SHOREBIRDS AT GRAND PRE - AUGUST 11, 1985

by Jim Wolford
Wolfville, N.S.

We had about a dozen cars and perhaps 30 people for this combined outing for the BNS and the N.S. Bird Society. As usual we first drove across the dykelands at high tide, and stopped at a couple of ploughed, open fields where groups of shorebirds were roosting. We saw a few harriers, but a hunting merlin provided a highlight as it chased a starling literally right through our group as we stood there gawking. When someone asked, "How do we know it's a merlin?" a now-famous line from Norm McGuinness was given in response: "If two or more people say its a _____, then it's a _____." (fill in any species).

Another open field, but this one grass-covered, held lots of shorebirds and gulls and five whimbrels. A "lowlight" of this trip was the superabundance of no-see-ums (biting midges) that were very hungry for our blood. There were hordes of them on the dykelands.

We drove to a point east of Evangeline Beach to view roosting flocks of semipalmated sandpipers and plovers, with other "peeps" mixed in. This year we split into two groups: Bernard Forsythe took half the group back to the dykelands to

search (fruitlessly) for a black-billed cuckoo that he had earlier that day; the rest of us walked the beach toward Boot Island as the shorebirds began to get active with the ebbing tide. The day's overcast skies made the flights of big flocks less spectacular than usual; here I'm referring to the simultaneous flashing of their white bellies as they turn in the air. But we did get decent looks at feeding black-bellied plovers, a greater yellowlegs, dowitchers, red knots, and several Hudsonian godwits.

Some of us finished the trip by searching the dykelands again for the cattle egret and immature night heron that had been there a few days previously. We found only a group of six lesser yellowlegs.

BRIER ISLAND - LABOR DAY WEEKEND

by Richard Stern
Kentville, N.S.

Various birders, some in groups, some in pairs, some accompanied by children and dogs, and some on their own descended on Brier Island for the Labor Day Weekend. Most arrived on the Friday evening, just in time for the heaviest and most prolonged rainstorm of the whole summer. It poured torrential rain, sometime lashed into horizontal sheets by high winds, until Saturday evening. The poor unfortunates who were camped got wet, but stayed anyway. The even more unfortunates that camped at Sandy Cove had a Bluegrass festival held on site to contend with as well.

However, the rain did not stop the birds, so several groups toured the island to see what was about. The main road in the rain resembled a tidal mud flat. Humans, Whimbral, Solitary Sandpipers and a Hudsonian Godwit were all seen at various times standing in the path of oncoming traffic. Stuart Tingley and Co. went over to Freeport to look for shore birds and found a Caspian Tern, so Jim Wolford went later to the same spot and found a Royal Tern - yes, definitely well described and different birds.

On Saturday evening, when the rain finally stopped the Warblers came and the trees at the west end of the island were alive. The commonest species were the Blackburnian, Cape May, Black and White, Redstarts and Bay-breasted, with a smattering of other species as well as Red-breasted Nuthatches.

On Sunday, it was still too windy for any pelagic trip but while several of the group were deciding what to do for the day, an Osprey, six Canada Geese and several Sharp-shinned hawks flew by. Different birders then did different things, the majority going over the Freeport to look for the rare terns again with most people seeing the Caspian. By high tide the beach at Pond Cove looked like a tripod- and telescope-owners convention, but observers were rewarded by five Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a Baird's Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper and Red Knots, Merlin, Purple Martin, Black-headed Gull as well as the more common shorebirds. Meanwhile the warbler-hunters in the woods found a Philadelphia Vireo among other things. Later that day another wave of warblers appeared and included two slightly different plumaged Prairie Warblers.

Finally on Monday it was calm enough for a pelagic trip, but not before people had been to Northern Light to watch the Acadia University Bird Banding operation in full swing, with numerous warblers, and another Philadelphia Vireo. By mid-morning two boats went out searching for seabirds; we saw Greater, Sooty and Manx Shearwaters as well as Puffins, Wilson's Petrels, Gannets and two species of Phalarope. However, for many people the climax of the whole weekend was a non-birding event. First one boat, then both, got within a few feet of two hump-backed whales who proceeded to show us their eyes, faces, and flippers. They sounded several times, raising their magnificent tail flukes high in the air above the boat. We were able to follow them for about half an hour and the "oohs" and "ahhs" and clapping and total excitement of the onlookers in the boats exceeded any birding event that I have ever experienced. In addition, we were then treated to a fabulous display by White-sided Dolphins, several with young, whizzing beside and under the boat.

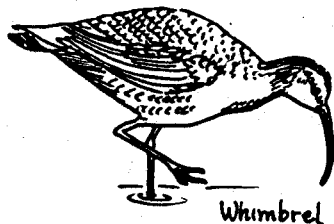
Most people felt that anything after that was anticlimatic and left. The total bird count for the weekend varied from party to party, but nearly everybody that stayed the whole weekend got over 90 species, and a few were up to over 120. All in all a very successful weekend.

HAYES CAVE FIELD TRIP - SEPTEMBER 15
By Jim Wolford
Wolfville, N.S.

Our observations of bats began with a dead one, probably road-killed, found at South Maitland. It was inspected by 15 eager spelunkers. At the Cave we saw a total of only 40 to 50 bats, far few than during the visit last year. This is probably explained by timing; we were over a month earlier in the year this time. One hanging bat that we examined at very close range had tiny light-coloured insects (probably mites) on its wing and ear.

After the cave-prowl, nearly everyone climbed precariously to the top of the gypsum cliff for a brief look at the many sink holes above the cave. Then during a leisurely lunch at the cars, we saw juvenile pickerel frogs, false morels and a soaring sharp-shinned hawk.

For more information about Hayes Cave consult the BNS Newsletter of December 1984 and especially the new publication from the N.S. Museum: "Hayes Cave Site, South Maitland, Nova Scotia".



GRAND PRE SHOREBIRDS - SEPTEMBER 29
by Jim Wolford
Wolfville, N.S.

About 30 people of all ages from the N.S. Bird Society plus the Blomidon Naturalists' Society enjoyed the beautifully sunny and warm day. To kill some time until high tide (my fault for a poor choice of time for the trip), we drove to Canard Poultry Pond. There we were fortunate to be able to compare closely greater versus lesser yellowlegs together; also pectoral sandpipers were with them.

Then we caravanned back to Grand Pre where the dykelands produced only 2 mourning doves, several northern harriers, and a few distant water pipits. The east end of Evangaline Beach, an hour after high tide (the ideal time for your visits), was more productive and the shorebirds there were quite cooperative for good viewing. In order of decreasing abundance, there were approximately 75 black-bellied plovers, 75 sanderlings, 20 dunlins, 3 red knots, 2 semipalmated sandpipers, 2 least sandpipers, 1 pectoral sandpiper, 1 semi-palmated plover, and a whimbrel (Bernard Forsythe saw 5 whimbrels).

From the Beach, we also saw 5 Canada geese, 50 male common eiders, and 15 white-winged scoters.

NATURE REPORTS

A NEW ORCHID FOR NOVA SCOTIA

by Bernard Forsythe
Wolfville, N.S.

With the passing of the years, the wildflowers and plants of our fields and woods seem to become more interesting and exciting. Of course, the enjoyment in watching and studying our bird friends is still there; however, there are times when birding is non-productive. At these times flowers come in very handy, and by now I find it possible to put a name to many of them. This summer, now that I finally have a 35mm camera, I found that looking at plants through its lens made them even more intriguing. Equipped with a 50mm lens and a set of close-up rings I set out to see what I could come up with. But the great numbers made the project impractical for my first season. The solution: choose one family to concentrate on first. The choice was easy, orchids, plants that I have been fond of for quite some time.

Nova Scotia has over 30 species of orchids ranging from some that are common and easy to find to several that are rare and found only with great difficulty, if at all. After many enjoyable hours out in the bogs, swamps, fields and woods I was able to come up with slides of more than 20 species, some good and some that will have to improved on in another season- not bad for one summer. All the rain we had may have helped as most orchids like wet areas.

Even family outings turned into orchid trips for me. On a visit to Peggy's Cove, while everyone was on the rocks looking at the sea, I was on my hands and knees in the bog where to my great delight, there was *Arethusa*, one of our

most attractive orchids. It looked like a little bright red animal with its ears up and large tongue hanging out, peeking up through the green bog. A first for me.

On July 24, we were having a picnic at Blomidon Provincial Park. A hike along the wire fence overlooking the water seemed like a good idea. That was my chance to duck into the woods for a look around. There just might be orchids there. Just off the trail under thick maple, birch and beech was a plant with wide orchid-like leaves and many flower buds on top, not yet open. I could not put a name to it. Back home with the books out, I kept trying to fit it into one of the known Nova Scotia orchids. It was very slow to open and after several trips, I had found over 80 plants in the first site and half a dozen or so in another site farther down the mountain, but still no name. Finally on August 9, Ruth Newell went over with us and we found the flowers open. Wide eyed, we were looking at Broad-leaved Helleborine (Epipactis helleborine). These days it is hard to find anything new for the province, and to find a new orchid on the first summer of photographing them was most rewarding.



Arethusa



Epipactis

Rachael Erskine kindly loaned me her copy of "The Orchids of Nova Scotia" by J.F. Donly, a beautiful, limited edition book of only twenty-four copies. In the summary, he states, "It seems an oddity that the introduced European Epipactis helleborine, which is now so widely spreading elsewhere in eastern North America, was not brought to long-settled Acadia with so many other plants." The elsewhere refers to Southern Ontario, Quebec, and down into the U.S.A. While I do not think the Acadians were the source of my plants, it is an interesting statement. This orchid seems to spread by its very fine dust-like seed more readily than our other orchids that have a complicated method of reproducing.

Late August and early September found me in woods off the beaten path near Sunken Lake. You guessed it, there was another patch of Helleborine, some 70 plants. It already has a good foothold on both the North and South Mountain. In the years to come it will be most interesting to follow the progress of this not-too-attractive-but-fascinating orchid. Be on the watch for it.

(Editor's note: I found about seven plants in bloom near Lake Brome, southern Quebec just about the same time! J.T.)

WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS - SUMMER

Paul Fairclough: Cambridge Station

1. On May 16th a pair of tree swallows moved from one nest box to another, on May 28th they had a clutch of 6 eggs, and on July 1st and 2nd, 5 or 6 of the swallows fledged
2. During the summer a trails (alder) flycatcher was nesting in my backyard, but a heavy rain washed the nest and eggs to the ground.
3. One day during late spring two cedar waxwings were in a dogwood in my backyard.
4. While camping at Keji in August, I saw a barred owl trying to catch a bat, and the next night I saw another barred owl sitting in the middle of the road.
5. In late July I observed a Junco feeding a cowbird.

Gordon and Judy Tufts: Wolfville

1. Dolphins seen swimming towards Wolfville Harbour-off western dyke of Grand Pre on August 8 and 15.
2. 7 osprey observed over LaHave River on August 18.
3. A pair of sharp shinned hawks darted through a flock of very agitated barn swallows over our garden on the Ridge Road on August 11.
4. 'Tree frogs' began calling from trees in backyard on August 12.
5. A rather tired-looking merlin seen sitting on an overhead wire at Melanson on August 14. Pair of merlins skimming over the grass together directly in front of Evangaline Motel Units searching for an early breakfast (8:30 am September 10).
6. A Single peregrine (female or immature) scattered the shorebirds along Evangaline Beach about a half-mile east of the Motel (9:00 am September 10).
7. Broad-winged hawks seen at or near our home on August 17 and 28 and September 6.

Jean Timpa: Wolfville, N.S.

1. Harbour porpoise seen swimming up the Cornwallis River: one adult and a smaller one and later two more adults-sized ones on September 13.
2. Another porpoise seen in the Cornwallis on September 23.

Karen Casselman: Cheverie, N.S.

1. Two perigrines sighted near my home in the first week of September.
2. A great horned owl returned briefly during the third week of August and hooted every 45 seconds for 20 minutes!

SUMMER WEATHER NOTE - 1985

by Larry Bogan
Cambridge Station, N.S.

Fabulous from July through September, is that what you would say? Let's look at the weather records from the Kentville Research Station. The 30-year average is given for the month after the slash.

Month	Mean Temp. (C)	Rainfall (mm)	Sunshine (hours)	Growing Heat (C-days over 10C)
July	20.0 /19.2	47.9 /70.2	258 /239	310 /284
August	18.0 /18.4	121 /98.1	229 /225	248 /262
Sept.	15.4 /14.3	20.1 /85.0	215 /175	161 /123
Summer ratio	17.8 /17.3 1.029	189 /253 0.747	702 /639 1.097	719 /669 1.075

August was a bit cooler and rainier than average, but July and especially September made up for that. In fact total summer rainfall was too small, we only got 3/4 of the average. But alas that resulted in sunnier weather by 10 %. It's interesting to note that September of 1984 had 100 mm of rain, five times the amount we got this year in that month, yet both Septembers were equally sunny.

----- HALLEY'S COMET -----

HALLEY'S COMET, 1910

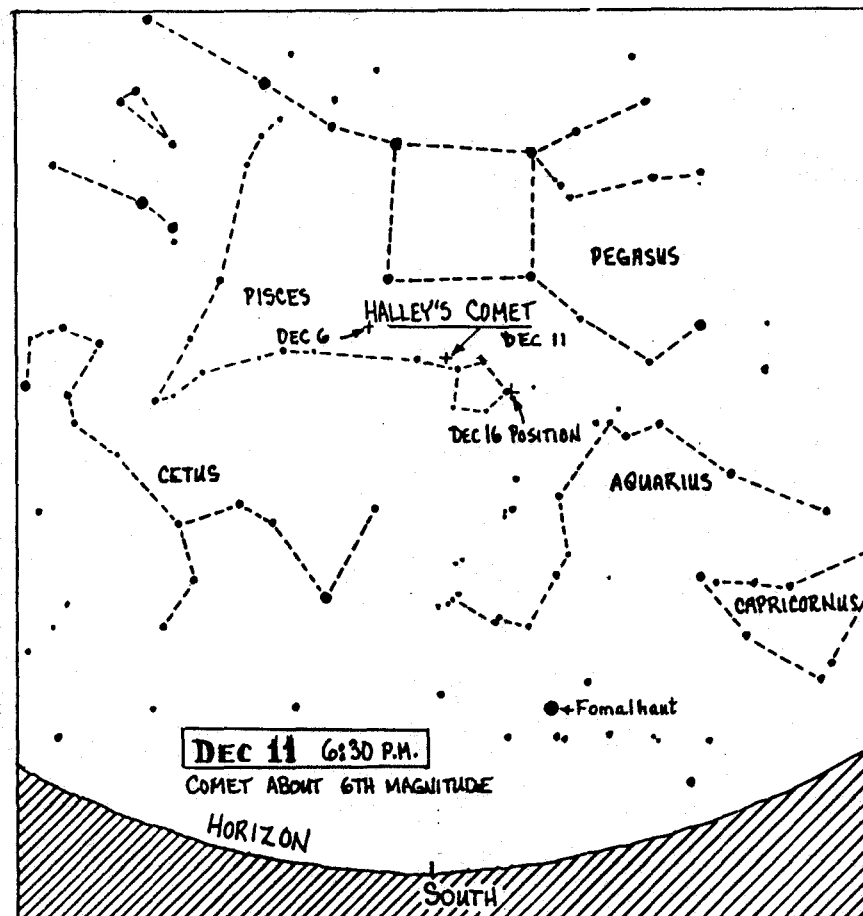
by Rachel Erskine
Wolfville, N.S.

In 1910, I was 6 years old, living with my parents about 2 mile north of Alwick in Norhumberland, about 30 miles from the Scottish border and maybe 5 miles in from the coast. At teatime one day I was told that there was something very special to be seen in the sky at night, a comet, which rarely came near enough to be seen from Earth. Bedtime was a six and to bed I went, but was allowed to stay awake. Presently, I was bundled into my thick dressing gown and felt slippers, and wrapped ,by my father, in a heavy carriage rug. He carried me up our long winding drive, across the 'Great North Road' and up the hill beyond into a meadow. This was suppose, in part, to have been an ancient British settlement, of which the mostly underground houses, now turfed over hollows, alternated with quite high grassy hummocks. I was carried to the top of one of these, and there above the western horizon was Halley's Comet. A splendid bright 'star' with its huge blazing tail. We only stayed a few minutes, but the sight remains one of the big thrills of my early childhood, due in part, I must confess, to the importance of being out at such a late hour.

LOCATING HALLEY'S COMET THIS WINTER

by Larry Bogan
Cambridge, N.S.

At the September evening meeting, Roy Bishop gave us an excellent description of the returning Halley's Comet. In addition, there is a lot of material appearing in the newspapers and magazines on the comet. Here is some specific information that will enable you to observe it for yourselves. Its appearance in 1985-86 will not be anywhere near as spectacular as in 1910 but we will have two chances

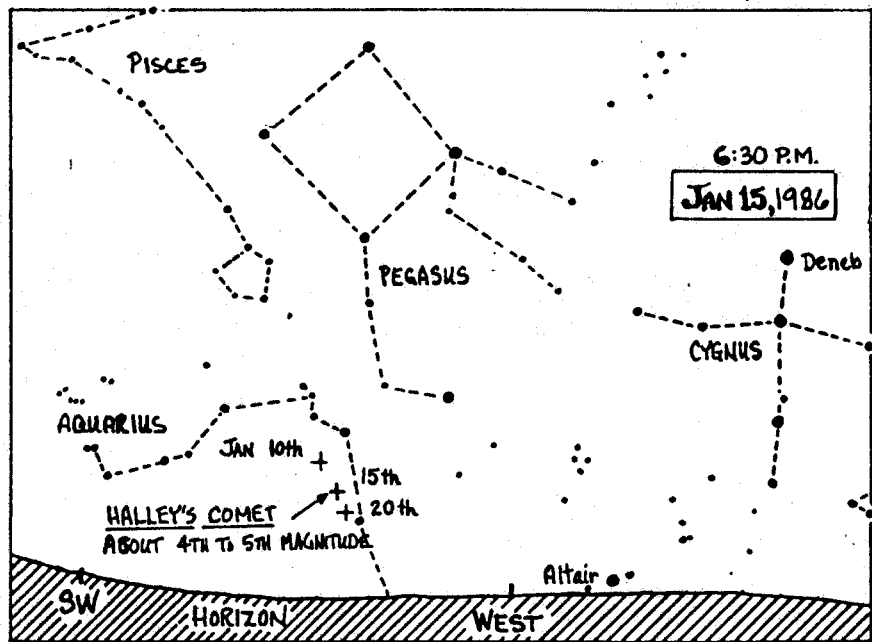


to see it. At its first close pass this November it will not be very bright. During its second pass in the early spring of 1986 will be the best time to see it since it will have passed the sun, developed its tail and become much brighter; however, in order to get that view you must be farther from the North Pole than we are. Not all of us will be able to get away from Nova Scotia so let's make the best of what we have.

I have include two diagrams to help you find the comet during two periods this winter and one for next spring. I have chosen December 11 and January 15 because these dates are near new Moon when the sky will be darkest. You don't have to observe exactly on these dates but can at any time when the moon is not above the horizon. In addition, you must get away from the light pollution of cities and town to dark skies for the best views. I have chosen the time 6:30 p.m. for the diagrams because the evening sky is dark by then. In December you can observe it later in the evening because it will not set until after midnight. However, by January it is getting close to the sun and must be observed early in the evening before it sets.

Around December 11 the comet will be still too dim to be seen with the naked eye and will require the use of binoculars, 7 x 50 mm if you have them, but 7 x 35 mm will work. The comet will be high (altitude of about 50 degrees) in the sky and almost due south at 6:30 p.m. on that date. The diagram shows its locations on two other dates, Dec. 6 and Dec. 16; This will give you an idea how far it moves among the stars in 10 days and allow you to estimate its position on other nights. I have included the position of the horizon on the 11th as a reference for you to use in observing. At that time the comet's brightness is estimated at 6th magnitude; that is dimmer than most stars you can see with the naked eye. Locate the stars near the comet and scan the area with your binoculars to locate a fuzzy ball of light with a short tail; that should be the comet. (Note, I have put only the more prominent stars on the diagrams as guides to the shapes of the constellations; you will see more in the sky).

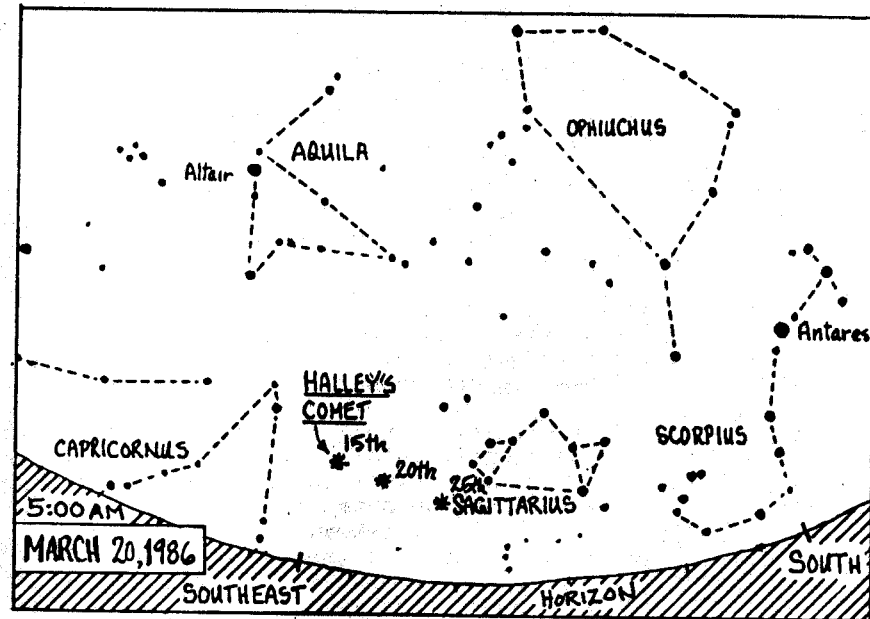
By the middle of January, Halley's comet should be as bright as the dim stars we see without optical aids. Its tail will be longer by this time, but will be getting lower in the sky since it will have moved from the head of Pisces to middle of Aquarius. You should be able to find it without binoculars then but use them for a better view.



I have included a third diagram for late March to show you where it will be at that time. You will have to get up before sunrise and observe it in the dawn sky very low on the southeastern horizon. It will be much brighter but the twilight, low position in the sky, and possible presence of the Moon will detract from its appearance. Select a spot to observe that has no obstruction on the southeastern horizon.

At this time the comet will have passed by the sun and developed much more of a tail that will spread away from the rising sun.

During the winter you may enjoy following the progress of Halley's Comet through the sky from night to night or when ever the skies are clear. Please note that in the field trips Roy Bishop will be giving a series of observations in January. Happy observing.



FROM OTHER PUBLICATIONS

WILLOW, WISHBONE, WARBLERS

The way this willow traps
fallen branches till it looks like
a collapsed rookery,
and keeps sun out of this room,

and taps the vegetables' water,
fattening on vitamins
so it's taller than the house now
and, come March, won't put out

many catkins--but for the enchantment
of a single branch bobbing on air
after some winged departure
I'd take a saw to it.

The trunk and limbs would make fence posts
for the garden, or in the fireplace
hold off a few winter evenings,
and the branches could supply

years of beanpoles tall enough
for the tendrils to work out
and Book of Kells design they had
in mind. Mainly it's the birds, though--

all those minute fussings in its
leaves, calls and their seedy replies--
convincing me, August through September,
that I'm simpler than I think,

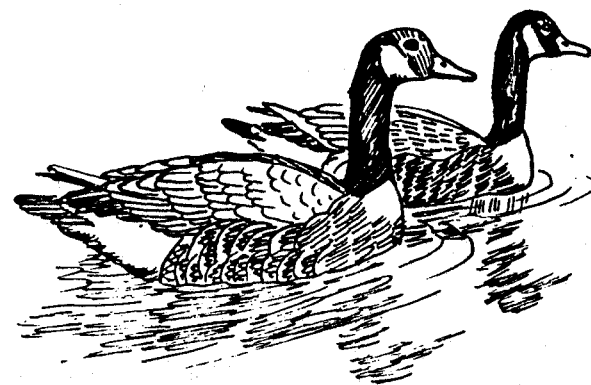
a gawper at flutterings down the trunk,
through I've vowed to lock up
the field glasses, not to look this year
when immature warblers that won't stay put

long enough to be anything
run their mirroring duets like air shows
around the trees, and far out on the bay
flocks go stringing over water

in lines that falter and break to flecks
and lift again on their wishbones
beyond all but a suggestion of birds
backlit by evening, beyond even

my intuition of their cries, and I praise
the fact beneath superstition's skin:
that bone we go dowsing for luck with,
there like a small horseshoe stamped in.

-Brendan Galvin



\$5.5 MILLION PLEDGED FOR WETLANDS
from "Conservation"
Summer 1985

Nova Scotia's wetlands and the wildlife they support will be more productive in the years to come with help of more than \$5.5 million pledged June 27th by two conservation groups and the provincial government. The money will be spent over the next five years to develop, improve and maintain wetlands across the province.

Ducks Unlimited Canada will contribute \$4,740,000, Wildlife Habitat Canada, \$387,800, and the provincial government \$460,000. Of the total amount, \$1,956,300 will be spent under a three-party arrangement while \$3,631,700 will be spent by Ducks Unlimited and the province. A habitat co-ordinator will be hired to work with a joint committee that will be selecting development sites and preparing management plans.

While no sites have been selected for development yet, they will be the most naturally productive wetlands in the province that were identified in a Department of Lands and Forests inventory.

Wildlife Habitat Canada is the newest national agency to enter the conservation field and this fall will issue Canada's first habitat conservation stamp. By purchasing the stamp, Canadians will be putting money directly into conservation projects that will guarantee a future for important species of plants and animals.

Ducks Unlimited has spent more than \$14 million in the Maritimes. The group has spent \$6.6 million in Nova Scotia alone to develop, improve and maintain 18,000 acres in 94 project areas. Ducks Unlimited Canada will spend almost \$40 million in Canada this year to carry out its various programs.

At the official signing of the agreement at his office in Halifax, Lands and Forests Minister Ken Streach said "we regard this agreement as a model for future opportunities where the private sector may undertake wildlife management programs and multiply the work conducted by the government."



SAVING BIRDS OF PREY

BY J. Shirley Cohrs
"Conservation" Summer 85

A bald eagle soaring over the hills, an osprey crash-diving for smelts in a fast flowing river or a great horned owl ghosting over a woods clearing at dusk, all are beautiful and inspiring sights, uplifting to the soul.

This romantic viewpoint, however is not shared by all. Until recently our native hawks and owls have been considered vermin to be shot on sight. Although a more enlightened attitude now prevails with the realization that these raptors are often beneficial mousers and scavengers, some are still killed or maimed by gunshot wounds. Destruction of habitat and disturbance of nesting sites, collisions with trains, cars and overhead wires, as well as debilitating or sterilizing accumulations of pesticides and other chemicals continue to threaten their existence.

By their nature, birds of prey tend to be uncommon. They exist at the end of long food chains, mature late and produce few young at a time. With all the new unnatural causes of death, their position could become precarious indeed.

It was with these facts in mind that the Nova Scotia Bird Society began its Raptor Rehabilitation Programme in May of 1982. Two members, veterinarians Ian McKay and Jack Cameron, volunteered to treat any birds brought to them at their animal hospital in Dartmouth. Two of their colleagues, Doctors Sandra Simms in Kentville, and Hubert Bennett in Lower Sackville, were invited to join the scheme, and accepted.

Having experts to doctor the birds, it was then necessary to find places where the birds could be fed and cared for whilst recovering, as well as being prepared for release back into the wild. Cyril Coldwell in Gaspereau, had been operating such a rehabilitation center for a number of years and he agreed to be part of the plan. Mike and Elaine Kew interested in such work through their connection with the Department of Lands and Forests, set up a new center on their property at Mason's Point, Halifax County.

All these veterinarians and custodians felt strongly enough about the plight of raptors in the Province to donate their knowledge and skills, to say nothing of many hours of their time, to the programme. The money for their expenses (surgical supplies, drugs, caging supplies and equipment) was obtained from the Bird Society's Sanctuary and Scholarship Trust Fund, a registered charity which up to this time, had invested substantial amounts in the acquisition of land (mostly islands) to preserve nesting bird colonies. Directors of the fund undertook to cover the expenses of the volunteers plus the cost of transportation of the injured birds to the hospitals and rehabilitation centers.

Now, all systems were go! All that was needed was publicity. Doctors McKay and Cameron sent a letter to every

veterinary practice in the province, explaining the scheme and asking their co-operation in emergency treatment and prompt transportation to the designated hospitals. The Department of Lands and Forests approved of the programme and notified all their district offices. Any person finding an injured raptor could take it to the nearest Lands and Forests Depot or the nearest veterinarian and the "system" would take over from there. Press releases were sent to all weekly newspapers in the Province and a representative of the Bird Society spoke on several radio stations.

The hawks and owls began to come in, not so many during the summer but more as fall progressed. Red-tailed hawks, northern harriers (formerly marsh hawks), merlins, kestrels, barred and great horned owls were treated. Some had been caught in leg hold traps, some shot and some hit by cars. Some died, but others lived and after weeks or months of rehabilitation, were restored to the wild.

The programme is not set up to save the lives of raptors so badly damaged that they will never be able to fend for themselves and are condemned to live out their lives as captives. The exception to this is in the case of very rare species, such as hawk owls, boreal owls and great gray owls, which may be used in breeding programmes. Although we do not yet have such a programme in Nova Scotia, birds of this type are sent to the McKeever Owl Rehabilitation Center in Vineland, Ontario, where they are valuable in helping to restore depleted populations of the species.

The programme is off to a good start and in the three years of its existence dozens of birds have been rehabilitated. The veterinarians and custodians have learned a great deal in this time. The care and rehabilitation of injured raptors is a complex subject and one thing that has been established in rescue work of this kind is that time is of the essence. The kind soul who takes home an injured owl and puts it in a safe warm place for a few days to see how it gets along, seeking help only when it becomes obvious that the bird is not recovering, has probably sentenced it to death. Birds, like people, suffer from shock and infection when injured and it is these two factors which cause more fatalities than the original injuries. The veterinarians treat shock with fluids and drugs and infections with antibiotics, only then turning their attention to the wounds.

The key to success of the programme is public awareness and co-operation, especially that of those people whose work or recreation takes them out of doors and into the countryside. We hope that Nova Scotians will not only accept birds of prey as useful fellow creatures but will take positive steps to help them.

Participating Veterinarians: Dr. Ian McKay, Dr. Jack Cameron, Dr. Sandra Simms, Dr. Hubert Bennett, Dr. David Rickardson, Dr. David Runnalls, Dr. Susan Humphreys, Dr. J.A. Thompson.

For enquiries about the Raptor Rehabilitation Programme or the Bird Society's Scholarship and Sanctuary Trust Fund contact:

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