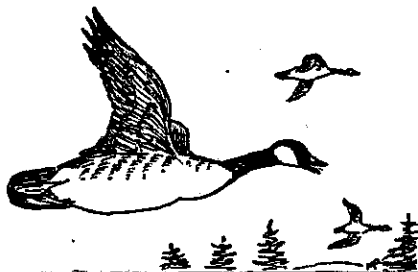


# BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 14  
NUMBER 3  
SEPTEMBER 1987



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SOCIETY NEWS  
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### BNS Autumn - Early Winter Programme

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

1. October 19 -- Bob Bancroft, Regional Biologist, Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests, Antigonish, will speak on "Wildlife and Woodlots".

2. November 16 -- John Gilhen, a Curator at the Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, will talk about "Amphibians and Reptiles of Nova Scotia".

3. December 14 -- Andy Dean will present one of his unique programs combining slides; music and commentary.

4. January 18 -- Jim Wolford, our own BNS President, will present a talk entitled "Highlights from Tundra and Tropics" illustrated with selections from his extensive collection of slides.

5. February 15 -- Professor Sam Vander Kloet will present "Saga of a Blueberry Picker: from Arctic Circle to Equator".

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The BNS Newsletter is published on equinoxes and solstices.

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

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

from the BNS constitution

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

## Field Trips

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

1. Sunday, October 4, 9:00 a.m. -- "Labrador Castle", a scenic outcrop of granite, near Chester with Julie Sircom (542-2446). All day. Bring a lunch to carry.
2. Saturday, October 17, 1:30 p.m. -- Fossils at Newport Landing/Avondale with Mark Pulsifer (542-2201 ext. 334 or 678-9597).
3. Mid-December -- Christmas Bird Count and, for the second year, an official Audubon Count. The designated Wolfville Count Day will be announced at our meetings as soon as it is known. If you are interested in helping in any way, please leave a message with the Acadia Biology Department (542-2201 ext. 334) or with Jean Timpa (542-5678). A fee of \$3.00 per official Audubon participant will be collected on the Count Day as required by the Audubon Society and their publishers. Those wishing to participate only in the unofficial traditional bird count are most welcome to do so at no cost.
4. Sunday, January 17, 1:00 p.m. -- winter woodland hike on skis, snowshoes or boots depending on the weather.
5. Saturday, February 13 -- wintering waterfowl and gulls of the Annapolis-Digby area in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Bird Society. Led by Peter Hope. Meet in the parking lot of the church on old Highway # 1 in the town of Annapolis Royal at 10:00 a.m.

## Speakers

BNS Autumn - Early Winter Programme

### Bob Bancroft

Bob Bancroft, Regional Biologist, Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests, Antigonish District, obtained his M.Sc. from Acadia in 1973. Mr. Bancroft has broad experience in environmental enhancement, habitat improvement including streams and rivers, pesticides, and energy efficient houses. Since he believes in educating the public about the purpose and goals of Departmental projects and research, he addresses many public gatherings.

### John Gilhen

John Gilhen, Curator at the Nova Scotia Museum, has devoted over 20 years of research to the topic of amphibians and reptiles. In 1984, he published an exemplary book which is a combined field guide, scientific reference and history book. He is also an authority on Nova Scotia freshwater and marine fishes.

Andy Dean

Through his unique programs combining slides, music and commentary, Andy Dean reveals the beauty and mystery of nature that surrounds us but which we rarely take the time to observe. His most recent title is "An average house is an ordinary lot". One of his programs was recently purchased by the PEI Tourism Department. Mr. Dean's profession is management of university food services, previously at Acadia, then the University of Prince Edward Island and now King's College, Halifax.

Jim Wolford

Jim Wolford, current BNS President and an irrepressible photographer, has built up an extensive collection of colour slides to complement his natural history library which, like his personal knowledge of plants and animals, is second to none. Mr. Wolford pursued graduate studies in parasitology of aquatic birds at the University of Alberta and joined the teaching staff of Acadia's Biology Department in 1975.

Professor Sam Vander Kloet

Professor Vander Kloet's study of blueberries has led him over the past fifteen years into the mountains of Japan, Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, the Caribbean islands and from Florida to the high Arctic. Dr. Vander Kloet obtained his Ph.D. in plant systematics and phytogeography at Queens University and joined Acadia's staff in 1972.

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SOCIETY BUSINESS  
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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to:

Carl Haycock for lecturing at our September meeting about the whales off Brier Island. It was interesting to learn that humpback whales, formerly, but not lately, observed off Massachusetts, are now being individually recognized off Brier Island.

our field trip leaders: Roy Bishop, Bernard Forsythe, Tom Herman, Robin and Connie Meister, Chris Ross, George Stevens, Sherman Williams, and Jim Wolford;

everyone who contributed to and helped produce this Newsletter.

BNS Newsletter Deadline - December 21, 1987

The Newsletter is a forum for the dissemination of information among Society members and all members are urged to contribute. Articles, reports, letters to the editor, poetry, sightings, trivia, jokes, etc., are all welcomed.

Trivial Tidbits of Local Natural History is selected, compiled and edited by Jim Wolford. Giving or sending Jim a written list of your observations in chronological order would greatly simplify his task. For the type of information Jim is seeking, see his note at the end of this issue's Trivial Tidbits. Jim's address is:

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

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

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

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

or to other members of the BNS executive.

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

### An Apology from the Editors

by George and  
Margaret Alliston  
Wolfville, N.S.

The editors, particularly George and Margaret Alliston, wish to apologize to the members of the Blomidon Naturalists Society for the lateness of this issue of the Newsletter. Although, we received the manuscripts from Jean Timpa in early October (only a little late), the incompleteness of the roof on the house we are building and approaching winter prevented us (until November 10th) from making the trip to Halifax to commandeer Margaret's brother's word processor for the usual two days required to edit, word process and print the Newsletter.

We hope you have not been unduly inconvenienced and shall try not to produce the Newsletter so late again (or to have our house in such a precarious state either).

### Fourteen Years of the Newsletter

by Jean Timpa  
Wolfville, N.S.

It has been fourteen years since Sherman Williams and I produced the first Blomidon Naturalists Society Newsletter. During many of the early years, I edited, typed and produced the Newsletter by myself. More recently Larry Bogan, Roy Bishop, Lynn Coldwell and now George and Margaret Alliston have co-edited it with me.

It is now time for me to leave my long-held position as editor of the Newsletter. I am turning over this responsibility to George and Margaret Alliston, my co-editors for the past two years. Both George and Margaret

have experience in the preparation, editing and production of reports, scientific papers and educational material in their respective fields of wildlife biology and computing.

While I am sure that George and Margaret will strive to produce a quality Newsletter, the ultimate success of the Newsletter is dependent upon you, the readers. It is your contributions, whether they be simple observations, anecdotes, letters to the editor, or full articles, that form the basis of the Newsletter. Again I would like to encourage all of you to contribute so that the Newsletter can continue to be an important part of the services provided by the Blomidon Naturalists Society.

Lastly I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you who, through your assistance, advice and your written contributions, have made the first fourteen years of the Newsletter possible.

Good luck George and Margaret.

### Membership and Fees

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

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

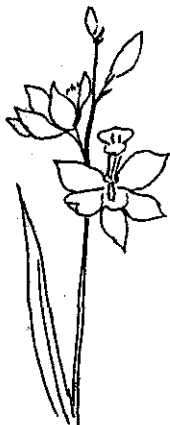
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FIELD TRIP REPORTS  
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### Mud Lake Bog July 25, 1987

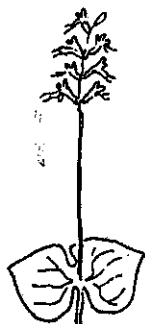
by Bernard Forsythe  
Wolfville, N.S.

Jim Wolford and I were joined by a dozen others for a most interesting afternoon at this picturesque spot along the Methals Road. Sometimes one is rewarded for agreeing to lead a field trip. On July 17 I was scouting the area prior to the outing when I came upon an orchid that was new to me. To my great surprise it turned out to be blunt-leaf orchid, *Platanthera obtusata*. This plant is usually found on the South Shore islands and in Cape Breton. To most it is just another little green plant, but to an orchid lover it was an exciting find at this location.

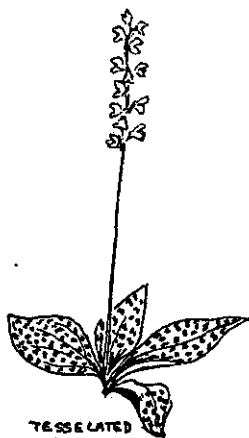
We began the outing with a look at the large purple-fringed orchid near Hollow Bridge. These colorful plants made quite a contrast with their rather plain-looking relatives, the little club-spur orchids which grew beside them. Several other stops were made along the wood road to the bog, mostly to view plants. At the bog, Jim did his usual great job of explaining the amazing ecosystem that occurs inside the leaf of a pitcher plant. The snow white of the white-fringed orchid made a striking contrast with the bright yellow of the bladderwort. Although the pretty pink



CALOPOGON



HEARTLEAF  
TWAYBLADE



TESSELATED  
RATTLE SNAKE

orchids, Calapogon and rose pogonia, were past their prime, we did find several of both.

Other than a few squeaks from chickadees and kinglets and a pair of ducks that flushed from the lake, there was not much evidence of bird life on this warm summer afternoon.

Someone always sinks waist-deep into the bog on every trip. This year it happened as we beat through the shrubs along the side of the bog. I wonder when it will be my turn to fall in. Maybe next year.

Many of the trees, mosses, lichens, and other plants looked at were discussed on the way back. A few frogs and a couple of snakes were also seen briefly as they scurried out of sight.

Some of the orchids that are native to Nova Scotia are very small in size with greenish-coloured flowers; hence they are not very striking. However, when viewed closely, these plants possess a fragile beauty of their own. The species with colourful flowers are pleasing to the eye; however, the small ones are a great challenge to find. After I showed the group specimens of tessellated rattlesnake plantain, heart-leaved twayblade, and green adder's-mouth, several participants soon were able to find other specimens of these plants by themselves. Making others more aware of their environment is one of the main objects of a field trip. To be able to pass on some knowledge and to heighten environmental awareness was rewarding to me and a pleasing way to end the trip.



Chimney Swifts and Bats  
August 4, 1987

by Tom Herman  
Wolfville, N.S.

The evening was clear and calm - ideal for a swift- and bat-watch. We initially assembled at the gym. After some discussion we split the group, in order to monitor chimney swift activity at two chimneys simultaneously and estimate

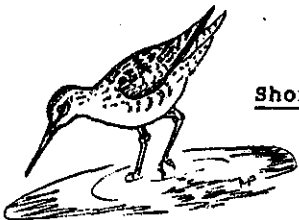
numbers roosting in each. One of us (Wolford) volunteered to man the watch at the southwest chimney of U-Hall. Past observations suggested that this chimney is used more frequently in early summer, so we did not expect a great deal of activity there. The rest of us, twenty-odd individuals, re-assembled at the municipal parking lot at Front Street adjacent to the chimney at Farmer's Dairy. To innocent passers-by I'm sure we looked like twenty odd individuals indeed, all staring intently at the top of a chimney!

Initially (about 20:30) small numbers of chimney swifts were seen and heard briefly over the parking lot and dairy. Some seemed to head in the direction of U-Hall and for a time we worried that Jim might get all the action. However, presumably these birds returned, and by 20:47 a flock of about 200 (??) was circling above the chimney. At first the circling flock seemed loosely organized - birds came and went and the direction of the circle reversed several times. Gradually the circle tightened, with some birds spiralling inward, and at 20:57 the first bird dropped into the chimney. In the next few minutes several birds followed; then the number descending increased dramatically. By about 21:05 most birds had dropped, and by 21:09 the last straggler entered the chimney.

Meanwhile, back at U-Hall, Jim certainly did not have his hands full. At 20:40 a flock of approximately 20 swifts flew overhead, followed by two more individuals at 20:48. At 20:59 three swifts flew over to the east, and one additional individual was heard loudly (but not seen) at 21:07, but apparently none descended into the U-Hall chimney.

Thirteen brave souls at the Front Street site agreed to estimate the numbers of swifts entering the dairy chimney. Their estimates, from lowest to highest, were: 249, 306, 325, 330, 345, 360, 428, 430, 460, 468, 485, 500, 549; average estimate was 403.

After the swifts roosted, we hurried to Willow Park to look for bats. Soon after we arrived several little brown bats (*Myotis* sp.) were sighted along the treetops in the northeastern edge of the park. Some swooped quite low, adjacent to the pond. Unfortunately activity was less intense and more short-lived than on the previous night when I scouted the park. Fortunately most of us had a chance to listen (although all too briefly) to the ultrasonic vocalizations of the bats on the Acadia Biology Department's new bat detector. After a brief discussion of bat biology, the group (bats and bat-watchers) dispersed.



Shorebirds (NSBS and BNS)  
August 9, 1987

by Jim Wolford  
Wolfville, N.S.

Grand Pre skies were overcast but cleared later. Ten cars drove to a field just off the dykelands at Hortonville where, at high tide, there was an impressive flock of roosting "peeps": semipalmated sandpipers, least sandpipers and semipalmated plovers.



We then caravanned back across the dykelands and blundered into a field with a roost of 100 short-billed dowitchers, 15 black-bellied plovers, 2 ruddy turnstones and 2 Hudsonian godwits. We also saw ring-billed gulls, oodles of common ravens and American crows (good comparisons), and a red-tailed hawk.

Next, as is usual on these trips, we went to the cottages to the east of Evangeline Beach. Soon after we arrived there, several flocks of "peeps" flew in from several directions and coalesced to make one very large, gray carpet-flock, covering most of the beach within our range of vision. Some people strolling on the beach flushed most of the shorebirds thus providing a most impressive visual and acoustical display.

Finally, after lengthy observation of this flock of perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 "peeps", we walked east along the beach. As we approached the point adjacent to Boot Island where the ebbing tide exposed the rich mudflats, we viewed a few hundred short-billed dowitchers, about 75 black-bellied plovers, four Hudsonian godwits, three ruddy turnstones and a single white-rumped sandpiper.



CREeping SNOW BERRY



Exploring the New Ross Area  
August 15, 1987

by Jim Wolford  
Wolfville, N.S.

We met at Ross Farm on this hot, sunny, nearly windless day. Chris Ross led the caravan about 15 miles south towards Chester. We parked and then explored the 200-acre property of Robin and Connie Meister. We started on high ground with a scenic view to the southeast, then we walked down toward the river. Our walk was very peaceful, slow and generally uneventful.

Birds noted were small numbers of white-winged crossbills (heavy cone crops were present on both balsam fir and white pine), two yellow-bellied sapsuckers, a family of fledged common yellowthroats with both parents, a spotted sandpiper, etc. Fritillary butterflies were conspicuous everywhere. Also seen were webs of fall webworms (communal moth caterpillars) over alder foliage, wasp-colored hoverflies and lots of bumblebees. In the rocky river we found green freshwater sponges forming crusts on the rocks, and we also saw pairs of damselflies in which the male was still attached to and guarding his mate as she was laying her eggs, one by one, in the floating plants.

Probably flowers received the most attention on this trip. We were surprised to see bluets still in bloom. Also noted were marsh St. Johnswort, steeplebush, water parsnip, many-flowered and small-flowered asters, goldenrods, two kinds of willow-herb, turtlehead, pearly everlasting, teaberry, and pipewort, plus a club-spur orchid in fruit. We also sampled lots of blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and creeping snowberries.

As far as snakes were concerned, Ellis Gertridge saw two unidentified serpents, and later everyone saw an injured juvenile red-bellied snake.

I believe that all participants were happy to see a "new" area, and some of us thought it would be a good spot for an early morning birding walk.

Scots Bay - Cape Split Geology  
September 13, 1987

led by Dr. George Stevens

by Sherman Williams  
Avonport, N.S.

Fifteen participants, under the leadership of Dr. George Stevens, spent a few delightful, sunny hours exploring the ancient lava flows that are well exposed at low tide along the Scots Bay to Cape Split shoreline. On several previous occasions I had walked this same route but had completely missed much of the volcanic story recorded in the rock. With George's keen eye for volcanic geology and his very articulate commentary, we were almost able to feel the heat and see the steam from the lava beds that flowed and cooled on the Triassic surface of 200 million years ago.

The basalt rocks, that cap the south face of the North Mountain and form the sea cliffs on its Bay of Fundy side, resulted from a series of lavas that flowed from fissure eruptions. The fissures were associated with disturbances in the Earth's crust that led to the opening of the Atlantic Ocean and the ultimate separation of the landmass we know as Nova Scotia from northern Africa.

Our observations began on the sea-eroded, basalt ledges about a half kilometre east of the Cape Split parking lot and included the area below and around the Scots Bay wharf. From there we proceeded westward along the coastline at a very leisurely pace, taking the time to observe many interesting features recorded in the basalt surface.

Of particular interest were the large, semi-circular formations indenting the Scots Bay - Cape Split shoreline. These, we learned are collapse structures that formed as the cooling lava on the surface fell into holes that resulted when the top of a subterranean lava tube caved in. We could even see where the tongues of a later flow had moved downhill on the top of the old flow and had cascaded into the round collapse basins.

We now know where our chances of finding amethyst, jasper, agates and other such collectable rock crystals would be best. The key is to find the appropriate depth in the basalt lava flow. As the lava cooled, it produced a variety of structures that are characteristic of the cooling process at specific depths. One needs only to identify the depth at which the right conditions occurred for the production of the crystals one is looking for.

On future walks along the Bay of Fundy shore, those who came on this hike will be looking for peculiar "D" and cone cavities, north-south quartz veins, east-west zeolite steam and hot water seams, horizontal shear planes, and petrographs that remind one of Mayan hieroglyphics. These features, along with the volcanic glass, weathered gas bubbles and basalt columns will let us know just how far down into the ancient lava flow we have progressed. We will stop, and in our mind's eye go back on a Triassic time warp and see where fiery, new lava pours over the surface of the old, reddened, gas-pocketed lava surface we stand on.



Brier Island Whale and Seabird Cruise  
September 19, 1987

This trip was cancelled due to poor weather off Brier Island.

Shorebirds (NSBS and BNS)  
September 20, 1987

by Jim Wolford  
Wolfville, N.S.

Overcast skies and occasional light drizzle dampened our spirits a bit, but eight vehicles began our caravan across the Grand Pre dykelands. Bernard Forsythe led us first to a merlin feeding upon some prey (two more merlins were seen during the trip). Then he showed us a field where shorebirds were roosting but the wind, drizzle and distance frustrated our viewing of dunlins, a red knot, black-bellied plovers and semipalmated sandpipers. Elsewhere in the dykelands we observed several northern harriers and two very approachable pectoral sandpipers; as we observed the pectoral sandpipers, a small flock of lesser golden-plovers flew in and landed in front of us. -- Thank you!

Preliminary scouting in the fields and on the beach suggested that a beach walk would be unproductive, so we decided to caravan for the rest of the trip. We first went to the Gaspereau River where we saw a dozen greater yellowlegs and, sitting on a fence post, an adult bald eagle. In some open fields where yesterday almost 100 killdeer were seen, only eight were observed today. Also several clouds of European starlings were seen flying about.

Lunch was eaten at White Rock (junction of the Black and Gaspereau Rivers) where we saw 60 common mergansers, a great blue heron, a double-crested cormorant, and a belted kingfisher -- what a convention of fish-eating birds! Kimberley Thorpe found a pretty diversion - a yellow and black woollybear caterpillar of a spotted tussock moth.



Then we drove to Sheffield Mills, where the smelly manure-mud flats of one farm have been a bonanza for shorebirds and ducks in recent autumns. Today we saw eight species of shorebirds, the "best" being two juvenile stilt sandpipers that were viewed at very close range. The fact that lesser yellowlegs were with the stilt sandpipers was most convenient since this permitted an easy comparison of the two species.

At "Hennigar's marsh" in Sheffield Mills some of us saw five wood ducks. At another pond we saw 13 American wigeon and a flock of red-winged blackbirds.

Our last stop was at Harris' Pond in the centre of Canning. There we saw a few greater yellowlegs swimming like huge phalaropes. There were also lots of ducks (much like Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth), ring-billed gulls, a red-tailed hawk, lots of song, white-throated and swamp sparrows, a common yellowthroat, etc.

It was interesting to have a very enthusiastic pair of birders from Alabama on this trip. They invited us to view their yard and feeders where as many as 200 hummingbirds have been seen at one time.

My species list for the day totalled 46.

#### Mushrooms at Kentville Ravine September 26, 1987

by Jim Wolford  
Wolfville, N.S.

We had a sunny but windy and chilly day for this annual excursion. Unfortunately both Ken Harrison Sr. and Jr. were unavailable but, on short notice, Kathy Fuller became our leader. Despite many reports that this year has been a banner year for field mushrooms and despite rain early in the week, the ravine at the Kentville Agricultural Research Centre was very unproductive at this time. Nevertheless, we had a very pleasant stroll in the woods. While it is usually very quiet and peaceful in the ravine, during our walk we kept hearing loud explosions at the top of the ravine (blasts to scare birds away from blueberries?).

Early diversions were several red-backed salamanders found under logs and rocks, and flowering parasitic beechdrops under a small beech tree.

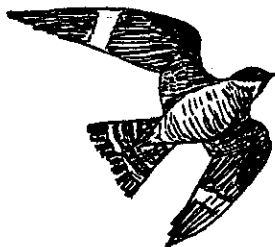
We did manage to find a fair variety of fungi although many were just emerging and were unidentifiable. A few kinds that I remember were honey mushrooms, gelatinous pseudohydnums, a Suillus bolete, a gypsy mushroom, several kinds of polypores (shelves), orange-peel cup fungi found by Toby Herman, a Lactarius or milky-gilled mushroom, angel's

wings, false chanterelles, and lots of small mycenas. There were very few large fleshy fungi and we saw neither amanitas nor coral fungi. Better luck next year (or later this season).

Something that turned me on was the finding of a type of slime mold known in my Audubon Field Guide as the "chocolate tube slime". Also pink blobs of the "wolf's-milk slime" were occasionally found on tree-trunks.

It was also interesting to compare our different field guides to the mushrooms; we noticed that my "gypsy" was someone else's "chicken of the woods", etc.

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NATURE REPORTS  
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The Fantastic Flights of Common Nighthawks

by Larry Bogan  
Cambridge Station, N.S.

On one of those warm, still, pleasant evenings late in the summer, four members of my family were treated to a Common Nighthawk fly-past.

Throughout the summer the swallows had been swooping, diving, and gliding over our field feeding on insects. Likewise during most late evenings, one, two or maybe three Common Nighthawks could be heard and seen also feeding on insects but at much higher altitudes than the swallows.

One evening we had just finished eating our supper on the picnic bench in front of the house and were relaxing, talking and watching the low-level flights of the swallows. Suddenly we observed a flock of larger birds flying and feeding at the same level as the swallows. The flash of white wing patches and the distinctive strokes of their wings identified them as Common Nighthawks. It was difficult to estimate the number present because of their constant movement over the field and circling over and around the house; however, my best guess is that there were about 50 birds. We were fascinated and impressed. They would sail swiftly past only a meter or two away and make amazingly quick turns and manoeuvres to catch insects and avoid each other. As they passed close by the fine streaking of their breasts was visible. One's neck found it difficult to turn fast enough to follow them. Their streamlined flights were most impressive.

The Nighthawks continued their aerobatics for about half an hour. As far as I was concerned they could have stayed a lot longer. Gradually their numbers decreased as they dispersed from the area. Finally only the swallows were left doing their usual low-level flights but they no longer seemed as interesting as they had been on previous nights.

## Encounter with a Giant Shark off Kingsport!

by Gary Boates  
Wolfville, N.S.

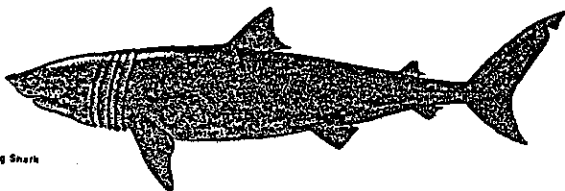
On September 5th, 1987, while boardsailing in Minas Basin one km. off Kingsport, N.S., I encountered a large shark. I first noticed the animal when its dorsal fin broke the surface five metres off my bow. The leading edge of the dorsal fin was nearly vertical and almost a full metre in height. The flexible gray fin, well supported by the thick leading edge, flapped like a tarpaulin as the beast slowly swam on an S-shaped course. Realizing that the creature was a shark, I called out to notify my companions on shore in the event of an attack. The wind conditions made it easy for the shark to keep pace with the sluggish 3.7 m sailboard. As the shark came around to the stern of the sailboard, I was able to get a full view of its dorsal surface. The back was the size of that of a large draft horse and the central region was smooth without spines, ridges or other markings. (Estimated total length of the shark was about 6 metres or 18 feet.)

I contemplated what I might do should the shark become aggressive. Fearing only the loss of my feet and/or damage to my board, I was prepared to jump straight up off the deck at the instant of attack thinking that, after a mouthful of styrofoam and resin, the shark would lose interest. At that time I did not know that over half of human injuries from sharks are the result of being butted or rammed rather than from being bitten.

The shark continued to swim slowly in the same curious pattern and after a time I became convinced that an attack was not imminent. I became more bold and shouted and bounced the sailboard on the water. These actions had no apparent effect on the shark's behaviour. In fact it seemed to be enjoying the warm sun and the company.

An increase in the wind allowed a speedy trip to the beach where many questions were asked and theories offered. The owner of a local cottage suggested that considering the size of the animal it had to be a whale. Another person observing from the water thought that it was a swimmer trying to climb onto the sailboard. It is interesting how subjective our interpretations of reality are!

I later purchased a Field Guide to Atlantic Coast Fishes and from this was able to identify the shark as a Basking Shark, a species that is completely harmless to man! I treasure this encounter and file it with other moments in which, if only briefly, I have encountered animals on their terms and in their habitats.



Basking Shark

Comment from Sherman Bleakney

The Basking Shark, *Cetorhinus maximus*, is a giant shark exceeded only in size by the Whale Shark. The huge gill openings, which extend completely around the neck and nearly meet at the mid-dorsal surface, distinguish the Basking Shark from all other sharks. This large shark grows to a maximum length of 40 to 50 feet. Two specimens from California measured 28 and 30 feet in length and weighed 6,580 and 8,600 pounds respectively.

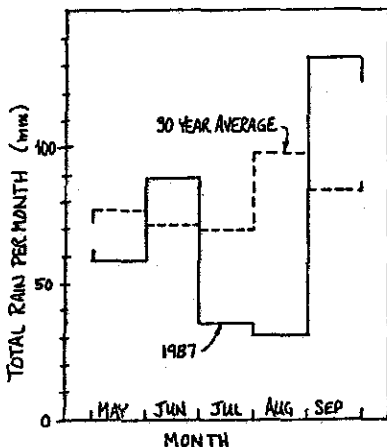
The Basking Shark is sluggish in its habits and, as the name implies, is often seen floating at the surface, occasionally on its back, or lazily swimming open-mouthed, ingesting quantities of plankton. The comblike gillrakers sieve out the tiny organisms in much the same manner as do the baleen plates of the baleen whales. Occasionally Basking Sharks will eat small crustaceans.

Although usually of solitary habit, schools of 60 to 100 have been seen floating at the surface. It is not easily frightened and can be readily approached by boats.

1987 Summer Weather

by Larry Bogan  
Cambridge Station, N.S.

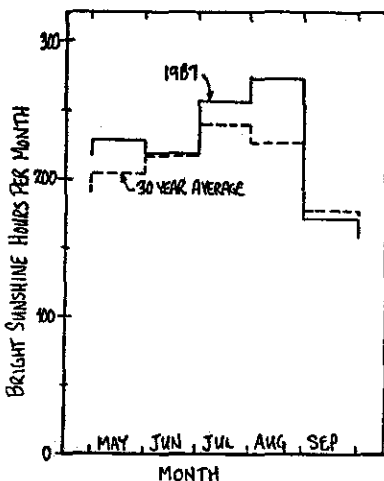
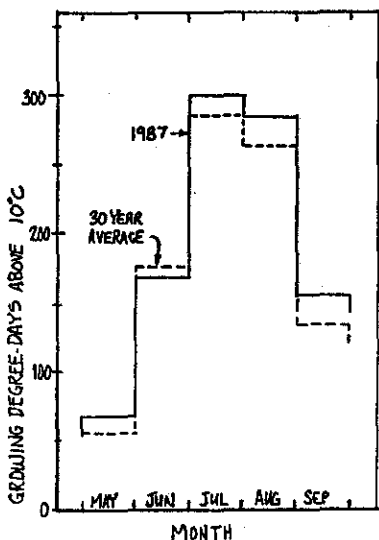
In Nova Scotia the summer of 1987 will be remembered as a dry one. As can be seen from the diagrams of the monthly weather statistics (as recorded at Kentville by Environment Canada), the dry period was confined to the months of July and August. In these two months a total of 67 mm of rain fell compared with the 30-year average of 141 mm. (Compare this with the 251 mm of rain we had during July and August, 1986!) The distribution of rainfall during the summer was interesting. Only 31 mm of rain fell in August and nearly half of that (14 mm) fell on August 22nd.



In contrast to July and August, in both June and September of 1987, total rainfall was appreciably greater than the 30-year average. In September, Mother Nature appeared to try to compensate for the drought by depositing 85 mm of rain on the Valley during the week from the 16th to the 23rd. Only 92 mm of rain fell during the entire 85-day period from June 15th through September 8th.

The other weather statistics for the summer of 1987 are more or less consistent with the long-term averages for our area. We had more sunshine than average, as one would expect during a dry period, but it was only eight per cent more than the 30-year average. August was the more unusual with 20 per cent more sun than "normal". Summer temperatures were consistent with the 30-year averages. The growing degree-days above 10 deg. C for the entire summer were only seven per cent higher than the 30-year average.

It was an ideal summer for vacationing and gardening (if you irrigated your crops). In mid-Valley where streams were being used heavily to irrigate crops on sandy soils, water levels in streams became very low and irrigation had to be controlled. I wonder how our aquatic animals and plants fared during the period of low water levels?



### Survival of the Fittest

by Judy Tufts  
Wolfville, N.S.

On a recent Nova Scotia Bird Society trip to Seal Island, Nova Scotia, a group of us were the appreciative audience to a fascinating spectacle of nature. We had arrived at a large pond and begun looking with our binoculars for ducks, shorebirds, etc. The pond was relatively quiet but we weren't disappointed. It was a most pleasant sunny September day - what more could we ask for?

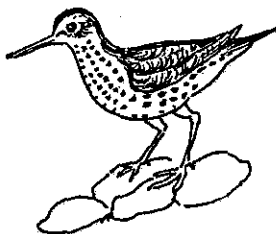




A Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) arrived, announced itself with its familiar clear calls "peet" and "peet-weet" - and alighted on the stoney shoreline of the pond, within easy sight from where we were gathered. The Sandpiper began searching among the pebbles for food, "bobbing" or "teetering" back and forth as it fed and called. We followed its progress with interest.

While we were observing the Spotted Sandpiper, we saw a female Merlin (*Falco columbanus*) leisurely approaching the area. The Merlin settled herself gracefully on the upper part of the sloping stoney bank of the pond - but not in the immediate vicinity of the Sandpiper - perhaps fifty feet or so further along where it could easily observe most of the pond. Apparently the Merlin had been attracted by the calls of the Spotted Sandpiper. We waited in anticipation to see what would happen. The Sandpiper continued to feed, still calling, but now a little more hesitantly, and the falcon continued to sit, silently surveying the pond. We watched...

Suddenly the Merlin rose into the air and, with powerful wing beats, turned and swooped down towards the Spotted Sandpiper, who, on seeing the advancing enemy, shrieked in alarm and quickly took to the air - dodging, ducking from the Merlin, as it tried to avoid sharp talons and certain death. After much evasive action back and forth near the pond, the Spotted Sandpiper flew low over the water and suddenly dropped to the water (or did he "dive" into it? - it all happened so fast) and sank out of sight. The Merlin flew over the area several times, circled, hovered, rechecked the area and, when no sign of the Sandpiper was observed, she left the area. The water was without a ripple.



I inwardly groaned thinking we had witnessed a "David and Goliath" type of confrontation and that after all this aerial chasing, the Sandpiper had ended up losing his life anyway...by drowning! Nature is tough! We continued to stare at the water where the shorebird had disappeared. It was if we were compelled to look there by the sheer drama of those minutes: almost disbelief at what had taken place moments before. Sad too perhaps at the demise of the Sandpiper.

When, suddenly the surface of the pond broke....up popped a little head....then a body followed! There was the Spotted Sandpiper rising out of the water as fast as his wings could make it. We could hardly believe our eyes! The Sandpiper hurriedly flew to a new location further along the pond's edge, much relieved to have successfully (and ingeniously) survived his ordeal, and resumed his feeding and calling.

We cheered the spunky little Sandpiper! He survived and we are able to pass on the tale (to those who will believe us!).

Note: Reference to the Spotted Sandpiper's diving below the surface of water to escape its pursuers is included in R.W. Tufts' Birds of Nova Scotia (Tothill, 1918).

TRIVIAL TIDBITS  
of Local Natural History  
April 1, 1987 - October 1, 1987  
selected and compiled  
by Jim Wolford  
Wolfville, N.S.

Date (1987)		<u>Obs</u>
Apr 1	-a harbour porpoise near the mouth of the Cornwallis River	BBT
Apr 3	-Somebody (help!) reported seeing a bat flying low along Bay of Fundy shore in daylight	???
Apr 5	-very early conversion to Atlantic Daylight Time -250 common redpolls at Wolfville feeder	JSB
Apr 6	-a northern mockingbird in Canning	MG
Apr 9	-spring peepers calling at Gaspereau	PCK
Apr 10	-30 brant at mouth of Cornwallis River -a painted turtle and a large frog active in Wolfville	JW JW
Apr 11	-a great egret at Port Mouton -at Cadden Beach, 15 piping plovers, 1 short- billed dowitcher, 1 pectoral sandpiper -a great egret at Port Mouton -single tree swallows at White Rock, Canard Poultry and Chester	NSBS JGT,NSBS JGT,NSBS RRN,GF BLF,JGT,JW
Apr 14	-a dead humpback whale in Halifax Harbour	CBC
Apr 15	-2 Iceland gulls at Wolfville sewage ponds; 150 brant near there	JGT
Apr 16	-an adult glaucous gull at Wolfville sewage ponds	JW
Apr 17	-one egg in a northern goshawk nest -a barred owl hooted in mid-afternoon at Canard Poultry -5 black scoters off Porter's Point -a palm warbler at Annapolis Royal -in a ditch at Gaspereau at night, 4 wood frogs were seen amplexed to (clasping) yellow-spotted salamanders!	BLF GF GF EM JW
Apr 18	-at Black River Lake, the ice went out and common loons appeared the same day -American black duck nest of 12 eggs at Kingston (300 metres from water) -20 common redpolls in Wolfville (last spring sighting?)	LP GS JW

Apr 19	-2 purple sandpipers near Black Rock	BBT
Apr 20	-annual spring run of smelt began at Gaspereau	CKC
Apr 21	-1 or 2 short-eared owls at Grand Pre	BNS
Apr 22	-spring beauty blooming at Cape Split	HS
	-mayflowers open at White Rock	PM
Apr 25	-bloodroot in bloom at Smiley's Park	HFN
	-2 male wood ducks at Canard Poultry	JW
	-belted kingfishers copulating at Canning	JW
	-at least 6 bats seen flying among shoreline rocks near Scots Bay	MZ
Apr 26	-fiddleheads of ostrich fern near Gaspereau	JSB
May 1	-a male Barrow's goldeneye at Canard Poultry Pond	GF, JGT
May 2	-a white-crowned sparrow in Canning	MG
	-a palm warbler at Cape Split	DL
	-200 surf scoters and an adult northern gannet off Harbourville	BBT, JW
	-a bat flying over water at Black River Lake (MG had bats in his Canning yard 10 days previously)	JSB
	-2 willets at Windsor	JGT
May 4	-9 purple finches at Wolfville Ridge feeder	JGT
	-a pair of northern shovelers at Canard Poultry Pond	JGT
May 5	-gaspereau run began at Gaspereau	CKC
May 8	-great horned owl nest, with 1 youngster now banded, near Sheffield Mills!	JGT
	-low-flying merlin rose up into a flock of tree swallows and grabbed one, at Gaspereau	CKC
May 9	-false morels near Black River Lake	JSB
	-near Lower Blomidon, a large, light-coloured (hoary?) bat flying in early afternoon	BBT
	-American woodcock clutch of 4 eggs have just hatched, near Greenfield	VL
	-common merganser has 19 eggs in a nest box at Methal's Reservoir	BLF
	-a cattle egret on Brier Island	RS
May 10	-carpets of trout lilies blooming near Lumsden Dam	MT, JW
	-oodles of terns arrived at Peter Island (next to Brier Island); 2 brown thrashers, 2 white-crowned sparrows on Brier Island	RS
May 11	-a white-crowned sparrow in Wolfville	GT
May 13	-large albino tadpoles of green frog found at Lockeport and Halifax (nearly same date as same discovery by Sean Timpa in 1985 in Wolfville)	CBC
	-hooded merganser has 10 eggs in a nest box near Sunken Lake	BLF
May 14	-ruby-throated hummingbirds seen at Canning and Wolfville	MG, BBT
	-a white-crowned sparrow at Port Williams	RS
mid-May?	-2 brown thrashers on Brier Island	RS
May 15	-killdeer with newly hatched chicks on roof of Wolfville school	JT
May 15 to 19	-American oystercatcher at Cherry Hill Beach	SF, BM
May 16 to 18	-a turkey vulture (or more) on Brier Island	PC, RRN
May 18	-cliff swallows attempting to nest on a chimney at Coldbrook	GT

May 19	-a 3-headed dandelion found in Wolfville	ST
May 24	-a few bird's-eye primroses in bloom, 1 northern gannet, 4 pine grosbeaks at Delaps Cove	BNS
May 25	-round stem-gall on goldenrod produced an adult fly in the lab (gall collected May 14)	JW
May 26	-at Kingsport Beach, oodles of barnacle larvae settling on sandstone and metamorphosing	JW
May 28	-near Boot Island, in The Guzzle, a bed of very large shells of soft-shelled clams, probably about 3500-4000 years old	JSB
May 29	-7 purple sandpipers at Black Rock	JW
May 31	-nodding trilliums and yellow violets along Gaspereau River	BLF,RRN
	-a luna moth at Coldbrook	HO
Jun 2	-albino tadpoles at N.S. Museum metamorphosed into white froglets	JG
	-a white-tailed deer on intertidal rocks at mouth of Black Hole Brook (Baxter's Harbour)	JW
	-sora rail heard at Harris' Pond in Canning, in response to a taped call	JGT
Jun 3	-palm warbler with young at "Mud Lake" Bog	JW
Jun 7	-small orange cup fungi ("blue-staining cup fungi") under spruces at Crescent Beach	MT,JW
	-male bobolink chasing a male northern harrier from presumed nesting site, at Cheverie	KLC
Jun 8	-2 parent great horned owls present as their one youngster is banded, at Cheverie	KLC
Jun 9	-a red-backed salamander with a clutch of eggs in a rotten log at Coldbrook	JW
Jun 11	-hundreds of "sea gooseberries" (comb-jellies) stranded on sand of Crescent Beach	JW's class
Jun 12	-lots of phantom craneflies flying and mating along Kentville Ravine stream	JW
Jun 13	-a great crested flycatcher at Kentville Ravine	JW
	-a large painted turtle crossed Commercial Street at Dairy Queen in New Minas	MT,JW
Jun 14	-2 sora rails calling near Grafton	JW
& 21	-a male rusty blackbird at Cheverie	KLC
Jun 15	-a red fox den at Greenwich has 7 pups	HF
Jun 16	-a rather tame red fox ("cross"-phase) at mid-day near Blomidon Park	JW
Jun 17	-a black fox seen on Gaspereau Mountain	CP
Jun 18	-a beautiful fresh cecropia moth found near Bridgetown	CL
	-2 harbour porpoises near the Canning aboiteau	MG
Jun 21	-a large snapping turtle walking down a dirt road in sand-barrens/bog near Aylesford	MT,JW
	-Virginia rail with young near Victoria Beach	HE
Jun 21	-copulating "fireflies" near Gaspereau	JW
Jun 24	-a luna moth found in New Minas	JSB
Jun 24 to 29	-an all-white gull at Gaspereau--everyone except JW says it's an Iceland gull (my poor view suggested a glaucous gull - great sport!)	BBT,CKC,JGT,JW et al
Jun 28	-storm-petrels visible from Parker's Cove wharf in evening, over the Gaspereau River, lots of common nighthawks swooping and diving together	SH
Jun 30	-a melanistic (black) porcupine road-killed near Windsor	EG
		MT

	-a wood duck with a brood of 9 ducklings at Drain Lake near Gaspereau	JGT
	-another wood duck brood near Sheffield Mills	JGT
late June	-at Duncan's Cove (Chebucto Head, NE of Halifax), a small seal (prob. a juvenile harbour seal) on an exposed intertidal rock was a tame lunch companion	MD
	-one-flowered cancer-root (a parasitic plant) in bloom near White Rock	BLF,RRN
Jul 2	-a probable water shrew at the North River near Gaspereau Lake	MT
	-a large "fishing spider" consuming an individually marked damselfly (marked for research on behaviour) at Smiley's Park	TH
	-a red fox killed 30 +15 chickens over two nights at Gaspereau	EG
Jul 3	-4 juvenile pine siskins at a Wolfville feeder	JS
Jul 4	-nest of a broad-winged hawk at Delaps Cove	BNS
Jul 5	-2 sora rails copulated at Canard Poultry Pond	BBT
	-150 pectoral sandpipers at Ellis Bros.' farm at Sheffield Mills	JW
	-bank swallow colony at Hillaton partly destroyed by sand-quarrying operations	MG
Jul 6	-zillions of hungry "no-see-ums" (biting midges) at Wolfville wharf	JW
	-elms in Windsor very heavily infected with leaf-mines of elm sawflies	JW
	-several large flocks of foraging shorebirds ("peeps"?) on Windsor Causeway mudflat. (Then 600+ dowitchers there Jul 14)	JW
Jul 10	-a "fishing spider", floating down the Meander River, was startled by a fish jumping next to it, whereupon the spider galloped away over the water and out of sight	MT
Jul 11	-2000 terns (half common, half arctic) on Peter Island, next to Brier Island	RS
	-2 short-billed dowitchers landed on whale-watching boat 8 km offshore and hitchhiked to Brier Island	RS
Jul 12	-49 cliff swallows nests on a bridge at Middleton	RS
	-showy lady's-slippers well past their prime but still in bloom in Smiley's Park	TH,MT,JW
	-upset female mourning warbler with nearly fledged young on Wolfville Ridge	BLF
	-Calopogon and Pogonia at their peak of beauty near Methal's Reservoir	JW
Jul 13	-a sora rail at New Minas	RS
Jul 15	-ceremony to celebrate opening of new hacking site for release of captive-bred peregrine falcons (5 of them) in Blomidon Prov. Park	BLF,MG,JGT,JW
	-mourning warbler singing in Blomidon Park	JGT,JW
Jul 16	-numbers of small eels (6-8 inches) in Canard Cr.	MT
Jul 17	-a merlin seen well in Wolfville	JW
Jul 20	-a handsome red fox on Wolfville Ridge	JGT
Jul 22	-adult sora rail with 4 tiny black chicks in Canning	JGT
	-10 sanderlings at Evangeline Beach	JGT
	-70 pine siskins in Wolfville	JW
Jul 23	-a northern saw-whet owl at Cheverie	KLC
Jul 24	-25 or 30 common nighthawks at Cheverie	KLC

Jul 25 -Kings County's "first" blunt-leaved orchids in bloom near Black River Lake BLF, BNS  
 -a northern mockingbird singing at Avonport RB et al  
 Jul 27 -a completely albino plant of the northern green orchid in Blomidon Park BLF  
 -a short-eared owl at Grand Pre BBT  
 -an adult bald eagle at Cheverie KLC  
 Jul 28 to 29 -a scarlet tanager on Wolfville Ridge JGT  
 Jul 29 -angry American robins chased 4 young gray jays from cherry bushes KLC  
 late July? -first detection of 2 partly albino house sparrows (one all white but has dark eye) at West Brooklyn (fide BLF et al)  
 Aug 3 -4 nearly completely white plants of helleborine orchids in Blomidon Park BLF  
 Aug 4 -a common nighthawk flying west at Kentville in late afternoon JW  
 -about 400 chimney swifts in Front Street chimney in Wolfville BNS  
 Aug 6 -at Wolfville wharf, noticeable patches of golden-brown mud-surface show where microscopic algae (diatoms) are present; also "no-see-ums" again very abundant JW  
 -a soaring sharp-shinned hawk was being mobbed by several tree swallows in New Minas MT, JW  
 Aug 7 -2 whimbrels at Cheverie KLC  
 Aug 8 -several common nighthawks foraging (not moving) in one area along Butler Road BLF  
 -a short-eared owl at Grand Pre BLF  
 Aug 9 -a question-mark butterfly, raised from a small caterpillar in mid-July, emerged from chrysalis JT  
 -an adult sora rail plus at least 3 black juveniles BBT  
 JW's Note: This has been the "year of the sora, the mourning warbler and the wood duck" since all three species have probably or definitely raised young in several locations locally.)  
 Aug 10 -100 willets, 120 ruddy turnstones, 300 black-bellied plovers, 150 short-billed dowitchers, 10 red knots, etc. at Cheverie KLC  
 -2 unidentified terns swimming off Wolfville JGT  
 Aug 12 -1 common nighthawk in Kentville in early evening JW  
 Aug 13 -in Wolfville, a flycatcher or eastern wood-pewee chased a cedar waxwing several times - feeding competition? JW  
 -an osprey fishing (!?) at Starr's Point RS  
 Aug 14 -wild hydrangea (a garden escape?) blooming along a wooded trail in Wolfville JW  
 Aug 15 -bluets still in bloom in New Ross area BNS  
 -lots of cones on firs and pines, white-winged crossbills seen and heard, in New Ross area BNS  
 -lots of crossbills, both white-winged and red, on Bon Portage Island RRN  
 -6 adult common loons together at Hardwood Lake MT, JW  
 mid-Aug -off the South Shore somewhere, a gigantic sea turtle seen (undoubtedly a leatherback) SS  
 -spring peepers (treefrogs) calling on Wolfville Ridge JGT

- Aug 19 -20 northern flickers and 30 juvenile American robins together on a Cheverie lawn KLC
- Aug 20 -about 50 common nighthawks near Mahone Bay KT  
-a female and an immature black-backed woodpecker together at Cheverie KLC
- Aug 21 -2 pied-billed grebes at Brier Island BBT
- Aug 22 -a pied-billed grebe at New Minas JW  
-finally we had a substantial rain after many weeks of nearly absolute drought
- Aug 23 -BLF showed me downy rattlesnake-plantain orchids in bloom on Melanson Mountain BLF,JW
- Aug 24 -impressive flocks of European starlings and blackbirds, totalling a few thousands, at Hennigar's Market alders to roost at dusk JW
- Aug 25 -This is definitely not a trivial item:  
Blomidon Naturalists held a tribute-supper for Rachel Erskine, in recognition of her long-standing support for the Society. She has moved to Sackville, N.B., and she will be dearly missed. Thanks to all who participated in the meal, especially to the Gibsons and Betty Rockwell.
- Aug 29 -3 immature peregrine falcons (very probably the released ones from Blomidon Park) chasing shorebirds at Evangeline Beach JGT
- Aug 30 -a northern wheatear, 8 Baird's sandpipers, and a piping plover at Cherry Hill Beach BLF,JGT et al
- Aug 30? -an American white pelican seen near Antigonish RBA  
(probably one was seen at Grand Pre in early August) fide BLF
- Aug 31 -a wood turtle seen at Hennigar's Market Pond JSB  
-adult mayflies doing advertising flights at Hennigar's Market Pond in Wolfville JW  
-a large predaceous diving beetle landed on softball field at night in Kentville JW
- early Sep -brown-phase caterpillar of tiger swallowtail found in Wolfville then immediately changed into chrysalis over 2 days JT,ST
- Sep 1 -2 gray partridge in Starr's Point area BBT
- Sep 1 -cedar waxwing nest next to a busy driveway, and 3 young waxwings fledged today, at Cheverie GR
- Sep 5 -a smallish basking shark (only about 6 metres) seen closely from a surfboard off Kingsport! GB
- Sep 5 -on Seal Island: merlins catching and eating to 7 dragonflies, single yellow-billed and black-billed cuckoos, a blue-gray gnatcatcher, a marsh wren, 2 northern mockingbirds, a great crested flycatcher, a yellow-throated warbler, several prairie warblers, lots of white-winged crossbills and fir cones, a clay-colored sparrow, lots of red admiral butterflies and a few monarch butterflies JGT,MT,JW,NSBS
- on Seal Island, to escape from a merlin's attack, a spotted sandpiper ran into the water and submerged for over a minute! JGT et al
- on Brier Island, a Baird's sandpiper, a dickcissel and a Philadelphia vireo LAL
- Sep 6 -on Brier Island, a very large bat with some light markings (hoary bat?). (Another large bat seen the next evening by LAL.) BLF

- Sep 7 -a double-crested cormorant sitting on hwy. 101  
shoulder near Middleton (apparently uninjured) BBT
- Sep 8 -lots of flying tiny water boatmen (prob. from  
salt marsh) landing on cars in Wolfville JW  
-about 30 common nighthawks in one valley on  
Digby Neck LAL
- Sep 9 -7 whimbrels on dykelands n. of Greenwich MG  
(MG also reports a fox being seen there a few  
times recently.)  
-a litter of 5 now-tame juvenile muskrats that  
will take carrots or corn from human hands JS,KT
- Sep 10 -a Wilson's phalarope at Harris' Pond in Canning  
(still there Sep 13 - BLF,JW) JGT,MP,LSC  
-also 46 greater yellowlegs, 2 lesser yellow-  
legs in Canning JGT  
-a single Bohemian waxwing at Annapolis Royal  
(cedar waxwing nearby for comparison) PC
- Sep 12 -an Atlantic white-sided dolphin dead at Grand Pre  
(probably stranded on or before Sep 9) JT,TH,MT,JW
- Sep 13 -an American avocet at Lawrencetown Lake (NE of  
Dartmouth) JGT  
-Canning merlin chasing pigeons and ducks BLF,JW
- Sep 14 -an adult and an immature bald eagle at White  
Rock JGT
- Sep 16 -6 lesser golden-plovers on beach with black-  
bellied plovers, etc. at Cheverie KLC,JGT  
-a spotted munia or rice bird (see escaped exo-  
tics in Peterson field guide) in Wolfville JW  
-a road-killed Keen's bat found in Annapolis  
(now called eastern long-eared myotis) PC
- Sep 18 -75+ common mergansers at White Rock JGT  
-2 stilt sandpipers, 4 lesser yellowlegs, etc.  
at Sheffield Mills JW  
-30 lesser golden-plovers at Grand Pre JGT,JW  
-very large amounts of field mushrooms (edible  
agarics) were collected recently EG et al
- Sep 19 -9 willets at Melanson JGT  
-at least 75 killdeer scattered in 3 adjacent  
open fields at Gaspereau JGT,JW  
-a lesser scaup at Canning sewage ponds JW  
-2 Canada geese at Grand Pre JGT,JW
- Sep 20 -a pretty, black and yellow, fuzzy caterpillar  
of spotted tussock moth found at White Rock DKT  
-5 wood ducks, 2 stilt sandpipers at Sheffield  
Mills BNS,NSBS
- Sep 22 -a falcon chasing pigeons in Wolfville (prob.  
a merlin but perhaps a small peregrine?) RRN,JW
- Sep 25 -an immature peregrine falcon chasing shore-  
birds at Grand Pre RS
- Sep 26 -mushrooming highlights for me in Kentville  
Ravine were orange-peel cup fungi (found by  
Toby Herman) and "chocolate tube slime" (slime  
molds) JW  
-on Brier Island, a yellow-billed cuckoo, a  
yellow-breasted chat, and lots of sharp-shinned  
and broad-winged hawks MG,RS,MZ
- Sep 27 -at Kingsport, a large bed of blue mussels now  
on the mudflat at low water; one mussel shell  
had a drill-hole from a moon snail; and lots  
of very small comb-jellies in plankton sample JW



	-in Kentville, with lots of American robins, one probable gray-cheeked thrush	RS
Sep 28	-3 hooded mergansers at White Rock and a total of 120 common mergansers there and at Lumsden Reservoir	BBT
Sep-29	-a small mink in Wolfville at the pond where the tame muskrats were (one still there)	JS
Sep 30	-2 pairs of wood ducks west of Blueberry Acres, Sheffield Mills	BBT, JT
	-a male scarlet tanager (winter plumage) and a juvenile yellow-bellied sapsucker in Wolfville	JSB
Oct 1	-a sandhill crane seen well, near Scotch Village along the Kennetcook River	SC
	-an "apricot jelly" fungus (an orange trumpet) found at Poplar Grove	MZ

### Contributors

RBA	Rare Bird Alert	EM	Erich Muntz
GB	Gary Boates	FM	Peter Mac Donald
JSB	Nancy, Sherman Bleakney	HFN	Halifax Field Naturalists
RB	Roy Bishop	RRN	Ruth, Reg Newell
CBC	Canadian Broad. Corp.	HO	Helen Orr
CKC	Cyril Coldwell	CP	Chris Pomeroy
KLC	Karen L. Casselman	LP	Loring Porter
LSC	Lana, Sharon Churchill	MP	Mary Pratt
PC	Peter Comeau	GR	Gerry Rathbun
SC	Sheila Connell	BNS	Blomidon Nat. Soc.
MD	Martha Dodge	GS	Gerry Schofield
HE	Helen Ellis	HS	Heather Stewart
BLF	Bernard, Sarah Forsythe	JS	Jack Scott
GF	George Forsythe	NSBS	N.S. Bird Society
HF	Harold Forsythe	RS	Richard Stern
SF	Sylvia Fullerton	SS	Sean Smith
EG	Ellis Gertridge	BBT	Brenda, Bill Thexton
JG	John Gilhen	DKT	Diane, Kimberley Thorpe
MG	Merritt Gibson	GT	Gerry Trueman
SH	Steve Hawboldt	JT	Jean Timpa
TH	Tom Herman	JGT	Judy, Gordon Tufts
PCK	Peggy Crawford-Kellock	KT	Kimberley Thorpe
CL	Christie Leonard	MT	Miriam Thorpe
DL	Diane Lindsay	ST	Sean Timpa
LAL	Lance, Andree Laviolette	MZ	Marion Zinck
VL	Violet Levy	JW	Jim Wolford
BM	Bob McDonald		

P.S.

You've all noticed (and wondered about) my esoteric inclusions of observations on all aspects of natural history ( e.g. Sept. 27). I want this column to include things that are seldom reported, and/or truly unusual events, or simply observations that are somehow remarkable to you. (You judge what to report, and how to report it, and I get to choose as to what goes into the column.) Whatever your contribution, jot down a few words about what, where, and when; then consider writing a short newsletter article on it (for examples, see Sept. 5 about the basking shark, and Sept 5 to 7 about the merlin and the spotted sandpiper). Finally, please report more than birds and mammals. Thanks to all of my "regulars" again!

JW

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