

BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 14
NUMBER 4
DECEMBER 1987



SOCIETY NEWS

BNS Winter - Early Spring Programme

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

1. January 18 -- Jim Wolford, BNS Past-President, will present a talk entitled "Highlights from Tundra and Tropics" illustrated with selections from his extensive collection of slides.
2. February 15 -- Professor Sam Vander Kloet will present "Saga of a Blueberry Picker: from Arctic Circle to Equator".
3. March 21 -- Show and Tell Night in Patterson Hall (Biology Building). Share your natural history interests with other BNS members. Bring a set of slides (10 - 15), a display collection, interesting books, etc.
4. April 18 -- Dr. Scott Cunningham will present an illustrated lecture on rarely visited coastal areas of Nova Scotia as seen and explored from seagoing canoes.
5. May 16 -- "Orchids of Nova Scotia - the Challenge and the Rewards". Our own Bernard Forsythe will illustrate his talk with his own photographs of some 30 local species.

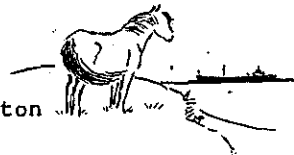
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The BNS Newsletter is published on equinoxes and solstices.

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



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

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

Address correspondence to:
 Blomidon Naturalists Society
 P.O. Box 127
 Wolfville, Nova Scotia
 B0P 1X0

Field Trips

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

1. Sunday, January 17, 1:00 p.m. -- winter woodland hike on skis, snowshoes or boots depending on the weather.
2. Saturday, February 6, 10:00 a.m. -- winter raptors (eagles, hawks, owls) and other birds with Merritt Gibson (582-7569).
3. 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.
4. Monday, April 4, 7:00 p.m. -- Canada Goose flypast at the Wellington Dyke. Leader: Sherman Williams (542-5104).
5. Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 p.m. -- an evening of owls, woodcock and perhaps frogs and salamanders. Leader: Bernard Forsythe (542-2427). Inclement weather date: Wednesday, April 27.
6. Saturday, May 7, 9:00 a.m. or 9:30 a.m. at the Cape Split parking lot -- our nearly annual Cape Split all-day, bring-your-lunch, hike for spring birds and flowers. Leaders: Sherman Williams (542-5104), Jim Wolford (542-7650), etc. Rain date: Saturday, May 14.

Speakers

BNS Winter - Early Spring Programme

Jim Wolford

Jim Wolford, BNS Past-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.

Dr. Scott Cunningham

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

Bernard Forsythe

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

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to:

Bob Bancroft for speaking on woodlots, John Gilhen for his lecture on reptiles and amphibians, and Andy Dean for his slide and music program;

our field trip leaders: Julie Sircom, in the rain and fog at Labrador Castle, and Mark Pulsifer, for his perseverance in finding the way to the fossils at Avondale;

Peter C. Smith, Brenda and Bill Thexton, Lana Churchill, Judy Tufts and Jim Wolford for organizing and carrying out the successful Wolfville Christmas Bird Count;

everyone who contributed to the Newsletter.

BNS Newsletter Deadline - March 1, 1988

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

Historically the deadline for BNS Newsletter submissions has been set on the equinoxes and solstices, the supposed date of publication. Effective with the first issue of 1988, the submission deadline will be moved back three weeks to give us a chance to produce the Newsletter on time. This might also alleviate some of the difficulties caused by the December 21st deadline conflicting with Christmas activities.

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

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

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

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

George Alliston (542-3651)

R.R 3

Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0

or to other members of the BNS executive.

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

SOCIETY BUSINESS

Membership and Fees

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

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

A Letter from the Past-President

Dear Members,

As I now sit comfortably in my "retirement", I wish to pay tribute to a large group of people among us who eased my tasks. Most of these individuals are, or were, in the BNS executive. Every year a few "retire" from the Executive - recent examples are Martha Dodge, Larry Bogan, Jean Timpa, Richard Stern and Ellis Gertridge. But they continue to be very active in BNS activities and to provide input to the current Executive. It is extremely important that all of us, yes everyone, communicate our desires and criticisms; so get to know someone on the Executive or anyone else who can deliver your suggestions for consideration.

For example, what subjects would you like to hear about at meetings? Are you happy with our offered activities and their timing? Can you suggest some winter workshops? Should the BNS get more involved with conservation issues locally, nationally, or globally? Should we provide refreshments at meetings?

Another way for each member to contribute something to the Society is by writing something - anything - for the Newsletter. Examples are endless: observations that you consider peculiar or entertaining or instructional or cultural, an advertisement or review of a book or magazine article, a poem, a short quotation or proverb, etc., etc.

The following people who have not been on the Executive recently deserve our thanks for their quiet efforts on various tasks (e.g. addressing and mailing Newsletters,

providing "goodies" at monthly and Executive meetings, filling in as Acting Treasurer, finding a new Executive every autumn, phoning the membership about special events, providing posters for meetings, etc.): Rachel Erskine, Brenda Thexton, Lana Churchill, Gerry Trueman, Peter Austin-Smith, Karen Casselman, Sandra Forsythe, Mary Pratt and Miriam Tams.

Finally, I'll single out Bill Thexton without whom we would all be floundering aimlessly. Bill is indefatigable in drawing up agendas for all meetings, writing up very comprehensive minutes plus all sorts of Society correspondence, and providing timely reminders to our Executive about upcoming deadlines, etc. Thanks, Bill.

Now everybody, become more active, go to a few more field trips (in any weather!), and give us some input. I will continue to give the BNS truly top priority in all of my activities.

Jim Wolford

P.S. Three cheers to the entire team that has been putting together our Newsletters.

**Blomidon Naturalists Society
Executive -- 1987-1988**

At our annual meeting in October, the following executive was elected for 1987-1988. Members are encouraged to contact them with suggestions for programmes, field trips, the Newsletter or any aspect of our Society.

President

Mr. Sherman Williams Home: 542-5104
Lighthouse Road
Avonport, N.S. B0P 1B0

Vice President

Dr. Tom Herman Home: 678-0383
40 Elm Avenue Office: 542-2201 ext 469
Kentville, N.S. B4N 1Y9

Past-President

Mr. James Wolford Home: 542-7650
c/o Biology Department Office: 542-2201 ext 391
Acadia University
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Treasurer

Mrs. Judy Tufts Home: 542-7800
Box 1313
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Secretary

Mr. Bill Thexton Home: 542-3722
Box 991, 36 Main Street
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Directors

Dr. J. Sherman Bleakney Box 456 Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0	Home: 542-3604 Office: 542-2201 ext 311
Mrs. Karen Casselman Cheverie, N.S. BOP 1G0	Home: 523-2837
Mr. Bernard Forsythe R.R. 2 Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0	Home: 542-2427
Mrs. Ruth Newell General Delivery Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0	Home: 542-2095
Dr. Nancy Nickerson Box 127 Port Williams, N.S. BOP 1T0	Home: 542-9332
Mr. Gordon Tufts Box 1313 Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0	Home: 542-7800

Newsletter Editors

Dr. W. George Alliston Mrs. Margaret Alliston R.R. 3 Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0	Home: 542-3651
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Pamphlets and Special Publications

Dr. Merritt Gibson Box 35 Canning, N.S. BOP 1H0	Home: 582-7569 Office: 542-2201 ext 250
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Blomidon Naturalists Society
P.O. Box 127
Wolfville, Nova Scotia BOP 1G0

Audited Financial Statements - 1986-1987
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURES
September 1, 1986 - August 31, 1987

INCOME	Membership Dues	\$892.00
	Bank Interest	15.09
		<u>\$907.09</u>
EXPENSES	Awards and meetings	\$190.73
	Bank service charges	11.30
	Christmas Bird Count	87.98
	Newsletter and programs	816.27
	Post Office box rent	6.74
		<u>\$1,113.02</u>
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER INCOME		\$205.93

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	Cash	\$427.93
LIABILITIES		-none-
SOCIETY'S EQUITY		
	Balance September 1, 1986	\$633.86
	Deduct: excess of expense over income	-\$205.93
		\$427.93

Treasurer - Judith C. Tufts

Auditor's Note: Audited and found correct.
(signed) George Fraser

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Astronomy Observing Session

Grand Pre Park

September 23 & 24, 1987

Led by Roy Bishop and Sherman Williams

by Sherman Williams
Avonport, N.S.

Due to partially cloudy conditions, the observing session took place over two evenings - September 23rd and September 24th. About 40 observers took part in the two sessions. Roy and I, with the welcome assistance of Jim Roy, took advantage of the clear spaces among the clouds to point out some of the most observable celestial objects.

Everyone had an opportunity to view the planets Jupiter and Saturn through the telescopes. We looked at Saturn first, before it dropped below the western horizon. Jupiter had nicely come into view above the eastern horizon. The planet appeared very bright since this autumn marked one of the closest approaches Jupiter makes to earth. Its reflected light took about 33 minutes to reach the earth. Seeing the moons of Jupiter was of particular interest to the viewers.

Attention was given to the brightest stars, especially those that make up the Summer Triangle. With the aid of Jim Roy's 8" Meade telescope and Roy Bishop's 5" rich field telescope, nearly everyone had a good look at some of the best deep sky objects. Among them were the M13 globular cluster in Hercules, the Ring Nebulae in Lyra, the spectacular double cluster of Perseus, and the large Andromeda galaxy. These are some of the finest gems of the night sky, representing phenomena ranging from an exploded star to a single star system containing 100 billion suns. One is struck by the thought that the light from these objects we saw that night had been travelling across space for thousands, and even millions, of years. To look at these objects one looks back in time!

Even though the Autumn Equinox was only hours old, the first previews of winter were in the sky before the evening session broke up. The Pleiades, a small dipper-like group of bright stars, is a prominent feature in the dark winter sky.

It climbed steeply above the eastern horizon and was a bonus for those who stayed and observed the longest. It was an especially fine object for those who viewed it through binoculars or Roy's rich field telescope.

We especially thank Jim Roy for bringing his 8" Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and sharing it with the group.



Labrador Castle
October 4, 1987

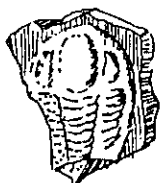
by Julie Sircom
Wolfville, N.S.



Labrador Castle is not a castle according to most peoples' definition; however, a castle is also a large rock outcrop. This is the type of castle we visited on October 4th. It is a virtually bare outcrop of granite overlooking Mahone Bay near Chester. About the only plants living on it are crowberry, three-toothed conquefoil, rhododendron, huckleberry (some still had a few berries) and lambkill. From the top of the castle there is an unobstructed view of the Big and Little Tancook Islands. Since it's only a short hike from the highway, it's ideal for almost everyone.

The weather was not ideal for hiking in the woods and the turn-out reflected this. At the Acadia gym there were only three of us: Shirley Van Nostrand, Jim Wolford and me. The drive across from Wolfville to East Chester was scenic despite the rain. When it was not too foggy to see, the wetness served to brighten the fall colours. On the way we saw two common loons, two double-crested cormorants and an American kestrel. We were met at the car pool parking lot near the castle by Hilary Sircom whom, I might add, is my cousin, not my mother as everyone seems to assume. (I'm sure she wouldn't want anyone to make that mistake!) Although the hike through the woods was rather wet, we stopped to look at several mushrooms - several boletes, agarics, a false chanterelle and others. We tried to see the view - honestly, it really is a lovely view although we were denied that pleasure by the thick fog. We only saw a few birds in the woods: a northern flicker, two American robins, a downy woodpecker and two black-capped chickadees. There were four rock doves roosting under the highway overpass. There were also some spring peepers calling in the woods, even in October! The resident porcupine (or perhaps porcupines) didn't appear, but we saw plenty of scats among the broken rocks.

After stopping for a while on the castle to discuss the fungi that grow on the rocks and wonder why the rock on one side of the outcrop is broken into large blocks (any geologists out there who could make some suggestions?), we headed back to the cars. We observed a small fir tree with quite a few needles that were yellow and swollen at the base. According to Jim this is caused by the balsam gall midge. Then we went to my family's cottage which is nearby to dry off a bit and eat lunch. Naturally the rain had let up a good deal when it was time to head back to Wolfville but, despite the weather, a good time was had by all.



Fossil Walk on the Kennetcook River October 17, 1987

by Mark Pulsifer
New Minas, N.S.

On Saturday, October 17, 14 enthusiastic fossil hunters gathered near Avondale, Hants County, for a tour of a limestone outcrop, on the Kennetcook River, that is partially exposed at low tide. The previous day I had driven to Avondale hoping to quickly reacquaint myself with the area and, more importantly, to obtain permission for our group to cross the only direct route to the river that I knew. Although I had not been to this particular outcrop since 1981, I was confident that I could find the correct access road, get permission to cross over, walk to the river, examine the fossils and then exit, all within two hours.

I did eventually find the road that I wanted, but not before I had driven approximately 30 km (along a four km stretch of highway) looking for it, finally asking directions from at least four local residents, was asked to explain what fossils were at every stop, identified various "treasures" from gypsum and coal to zeolite and Indian artifacts, turned down one invitation to lunch and repeated my family genealogy to everyone who wanted to know where I was from and then "whose boy are you?".

Now that I had the right road I intended to reach the farm house and then get permission for our group to park our cars in their yard. However, I encountered a padlocked gate completely blocking any passage around or through the road. I had never known the gate to be locked before so I went to a neighbour and asked about a key. Fortunately this neighbour did have a key... but refused to open the gate unless I had permission from the owner who now lived in Ottawa. I told the "keeper of the gate" about our group, the purpose of our tour and that I could guarantee the safety of the property if he would loan me the key for the following day. The neighbour replied that, as much as he would like to, he could not give me the key, and besides, he was leaving within minutes and wouldn't be back in time to let us on the property even if we could get permission. At this point I had spent all afternoon trying to gain access to the river and was not any closer than when I had started.

The following morning I returned to Avondale and started to look for alternative routes to the river. Luckily my first attempt was at the property of Kevin Potter whose land is adjacent to the farm from which I originally intended to gain access to the river. Mr. Potter gladly showed me his land and pointed out the easiest route to the river. I was extremely grateful for his hospitality.

After lunch I met the BNS group at a pre-arranged location and we started out for the Potter property. Despite some minor car problems and a bit of confusion over which fossil tour was being held where (the Nova Scotia Museum was hosting a concurrent fossil tour at a nearby location), we all managed to meet at the Potter farm.

A relatively easy twenty-five minute walk through fields, across a tidal creek and then along the shore brought us to the limestone beds that were rapidly being exposed by the falling tide.

This particular outcrop represents a series of marine transgressions and regressions (rising and falling sea levels) that occurred over 300 million years ago when most of the area was part of the Windsor Sea. The various layers of limestone were deposited under sub-tropical conditions which were ideal for a diversity of animal life and the subsequent preservation of these life forms as fossils.

We found a variety of fossil filter-feeding organisms such as brachiopods (clam-like bivalves) of wide ranging shapes and sizes, bryozoans, crinoid stem fragments and solitary rugose corals.

I was particularly pleased to see both nautiloid and orthoconic cephalopods (coiled and straight shelled relatives of squid) and trilobites, a rare group for this limestone unit. One of the orthoconic cephalopods was so well preserved that a gradation of colour from dorsal to ventral surfaces was still visible. We found at least six partial or nearly complete trilobite specimens in the rubble along the cliff face.

For those that were interested in the living rather than the long dead, the receding tide created many tide pools each containing a variety of intertidal organisms. Jim Wolford answered questions concerning the life forms using these intertidal pools.



Wolfville Christmas Bird Count
December 19, 1987

by Peter C. Smith
Wolfville, N.S.



A total of 64 people in 21 parties drove (360 miles in 60 party-hours), walked, snow-shoed, skied (109 miles in 64 party-hours), and observed feeders (47 hours observation by 13 people at 10 feeders) during the annual Wolfville Christmas Bird Count on December 19th. On this overcast and brisk (-8 deg. C) yet calm day, 75 species were noted.

Highlights included Hooded Merganser, Snowy and Short-eared Owls, Black-backed Woodpecker, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Rusty Blackbird.

The large numbers of American Black Duck, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, and American Tree Sparrow are noteworthy, perhaps reflecting, in part, the value of the habitat and agricultural diversity in the area. American Crow and European Starling numbers were enhanced by counts at roost sites. There were five "coveys" of Gray Partridge seen but this census included some single birds and only one good-sized flock (11). Our concern for this species continues. Observation of the Minas Basin during high tide again paid dividends with Red-throated Loon, Black Scoter, White-winged Scoter and Common Elder, as well as other ducks and geese, being seen. Cedar Waxwing and Common Redpoll were notably absent in the Count.

During the Count Period (CP), three days before and after the Count, six species were observed that were not seen on the Count Day. These species were: Gyrfalcon, Peregrine Falcon, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cape May Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark and Sharp-tailed Sparrow. These, together with the 75 species seen on Count Day, contributed to a record year (81 species)!

I wish to thank the Count participants, the Thextons for their organization of the evening meal, Lana Churchill and Judy Tufts for their book-keeping, and Jim Wolford for his aid in compiling the Count statistics.

Wolfville Christmas Bird Count
December 19, 1987

Red-throated Loon.....	1	Gray Jay.....	3
Great Cormorant.....	4	Blue Jay.....	709
Great Blue Heron.....	2	American Crow.....	10633
Canada Goose.....	573	Common Raven.....	264
American Black Duck... 2230		Bl.-capped Chickadee..	196
Mallard.....	28	Boreal Chickadee.....	1
Northern Pintail.....	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	16
Common Eider.....	40	Wh.-breasted Nuthatch	7
Black Scoter.....	15	Brown Creeper.....	3
White-winged Scoter... 84		Golden-crowned Kinglet	39
Common Goldeneye.....	11	Ruby-crowned Kinglet..	CP-1
Hooded Merganser.....	1	American Robin.....	220
Common Merganser.....	13	Bohemian Waxwing.....	14
Bald Eagle - adult.... 23		Northern Shrike.....	3
Bald Eagle - immature 26		European Starling....	28901
Northern Harrier.....	3	Cape May Warbler.....	CP-1
Sharp-shinned Hawk.... 17		Yellow-rumped Warbler	6
Northern Goshawk.....	2	Yellow-breasted Chat..	1
Red-tailed Hawk.....	140	American Tree Sparrow	273
Rough-legged Hawk.....	12	Chipping Sparrow.....	2
Merlin.....	2	Savannah Sparrow.....	14
Peregrine Falcon.....	CP-1	Sharp-tailed Sparrow..	CP-1
Gyrfalcon.....	CP-1	Song Sparrow.....	151
Gray Partridge.....	21	Swamp Sparrow.....	4
Ring-necked Pheasant.. 304		White-throated Sparrow	15
Spruce Grouse.....	1	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Ruffed Grouse.....	3	Dark-eyed Junco.....	963
Ring-billed Gull.....	39	Lapland Longspur.....	25
Herring Gull.....	2674	Snow Bunting.....	646
Iceland Gull.....	4	Red-winged Blackbird..	25
Glaucous Gull.....	1	Eastern Meadowlark....	CP-1
Great Bl.-backed Gull 2271		Rusty Blackbird.....	1
Rock Dove.....	964	Common Grackle.....	1
Mourning Dove.....	554	Brown-headed Cowbird..	321
Snowy Owl.....	1	Pine Grosbeak.....	113
Short-eared Owl.....	1	Purple Finch.....	45
Downy Woodpecker.....	34	White-winged Crossbill	34
Hairy Woodpecker.....	25	Pine Siskin.....	79
Bl.-backed Woodpecker	1	American Goldfinch....	325
Pileated Woodpecker... 3		Evening Grosbeak.....	405
Horned Lark.....	271	House Sparrow.....	2018

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 56877



Brier Island Christmas Bird Count
December 29, 1987

by Richard Stern
Kentville, N.S.

The number of participants in this year's Brier Island Christmas Bird Count was smaller than usual but nevertheless a number of interesting species were observed. On Monday evening, December 28th, Jim Wolford joined me and my wife and children in our cottage at the southwestern end of Brier Island. We decided to hold the count the next day despite a rather ominous weather forecast. The snow started shortly after dawn but, during the morning at least, was intermittent and allowed us good views of some birds. Jim and I formed one party and for part of the day my wife and children watched for birds around the cottage and at a friend's feeder in Westport.

Jim and I set off around Pond Cove shortly after dawn to observe sea ducks, loons, Red-necked Grebes, etc. which were present in good numbers. Then we headed for Westport and walked around the town looking for land birds which were almost non-existent. We saw, for example, one American Tree Sparrow, one White-throated Sparrow, etc. There was, however, a Rufous-sided Towhee, in some bushes outside a house at the north end of Westport. We were told by the owner of the house that the Towhee had been present at his feeder for about a week. Later we also found a first-winter plumaged Common Black-headed Gull in with the Herring Gulls in Westport Harbour. We drove down to Gullrock Point and, looking through the binoculars at two whitish looking objects perched on top of green, grassy hummocks, we realized that one of them was a plastic garbage can and the other was a Snowy Owl. The Owl looked warm and cozy in its fluffed up feathers and kept turning its head and blinking at us but otherwise showing little concern even when we drove close by.

Meanwhile, the wind was getting stronger and the snow more horizontal and conditions for birding were becoming less and less comfortable.

We tried to spend as long as we could at the Western Light but the cold winds and spray and poor visibility made "sea watching" very difficult.

After lunch, Jim and I split up. Jim headed back across Pond Cove and had a couple of falls on the ice while I went up to Northern Point and attempted to peer into the teeth of the (by now) gale from the shelter of the lighthouse and count the Kittiwakes flying offshore.

By this time the weather warnings were getting more and more ominous having progressed from merely "heavy snowfall warning" through "wind warning" to "blizzard warning" and we decided it was time to hit the trail. Although we attempted to "sea watch" from the deck of the ferry on the way back, swells, high winds and spray crashing over the car, deck and everything else, made it very difficult.

The drive home was interesting but we were glad to have got home that day since driving conditions the following day were impossible.

Despite the weather conditions and the small number of participants, we managed to achieve a total of 32 species and had an enjoyable day.



2ND WEST HANTS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Karen Casselman
Cheverie, N.S.

Nineteen participants enjoyed covering their territories under bright, sunny skies on Saturday, January 2 during the second annual West Hants Christmas Count. With the centre of our circle at Centre Burlington, six parties successfully covered a large area that included the following communities: Hantsport; Falmouth; Windsor; St. Croix; Newport; Brooklyn; Lower, Centre and Upper Burlington; Summerville; Kempt; Cheverie; Bramber; Pembroke; Walton; Cogmagun and Scotch Village. Although high winds limited walking and listening, a total of 51 species were counted, compared with the 47 seen last year.

The highlight of the day was West Hants County's answer to the attractive Red-bellied Woodpecker wintering in the East Hants County village of Noel Shore; notably, an immature Red-headed Woodpecker spotted by Gordon and Judy Tufts at a feeder in Upper Burlington, not far from the Kennecook River Bridge. It happened to be the first bird identified by the Tufts that day! (It, and the other woodpecker, have since been seen by many people.) A flock of Purple Sandpipers near Kempt was another bonus. The major disappointment was a failure of the local Great Horned Owls to co-operate. On Boxing an immature obligingly came when called (using a hooter) to the Casselman's yard; however, we could not obtain a repeat performance during the count period.

Some other of the birds on the list that might be mentioned are the Bald Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, White-winged Scoter, Common Merganser, Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill.

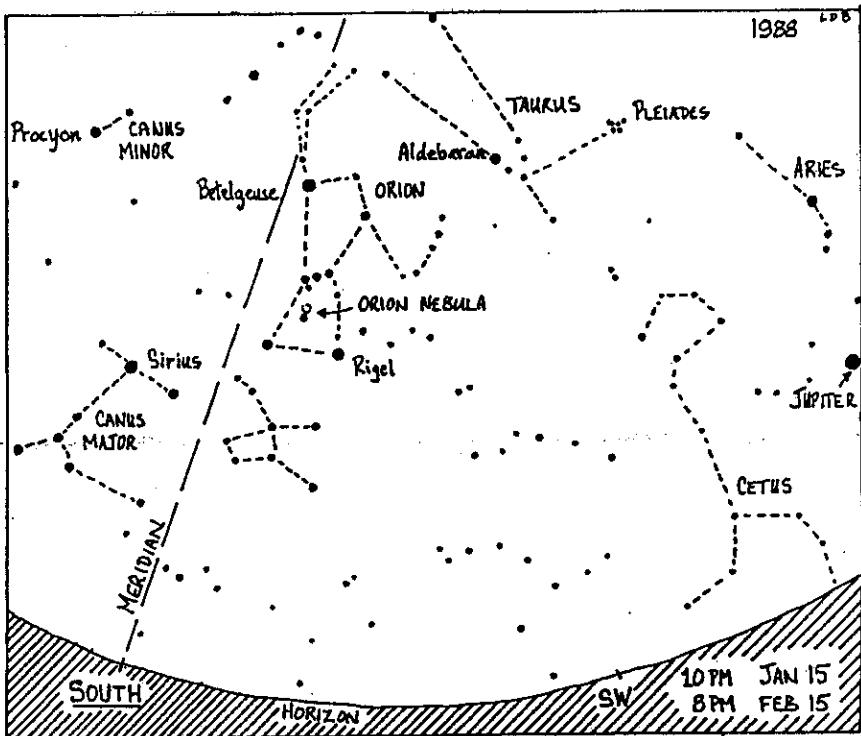
NATURE REPORTS

Winter Stars and Planets - 1988

by Larry Bogan
Cambridge Station, N.S.

The length of the daylight is now on the upswing but that means there are fewer and fewer minutes each day to observe the heavens. I know that most of you do not spend much time outdoors under the crisp, clear, and very cold night skies of the winter. However, when you are out skiing in the moonlight, look up and take notice of some of the bright objects that can be seen even in a bright moonlit sky.

Besides Ursa Major (best known for the Big Dipper in this constellation), Orion is one bright constellation that most people remember and recognize. It stands out clearly in the sky and is due south at 10 p.m. in mid-January; by only 8 p.m. in mid-February it is in the same position (see the star chart with this article). The constellation consists of four bright stars at the corners of a distorted rectangle, with three slightly dimmer stars in the center of the



rectangle. It's the straight-line pattern of these three stars that make the easily-recognized belt of Orion. Just below this belt hang some scattered stars that make the sword of Orion. In that group appears a fuzzy patch, the Great Orion Nebula. If you use your binoculars on this object during a moonless, clear night you will see one of the most interesting and studied objects in our galaxy. The light you see is fluorescence from gases that exist in the Nebula. In this case the source of energy that causes the fluorescence is the invisible, ultraviolet light from the hot, bright stars in the center of the Nebula. Embedded in the Nebula, but invisible to the eye, are many dim reddish stars that are in the process of being formed from the matter in this cloud. Radio astronomers have discovered many interesting molecules in the Orion Nebula, some of which support laser action -- but that is a long story.

The upper left star of the Orion rectangle is Betelgeuse (1), a star with a golden-orange colour that contrasts with the star on the lower right, Rigel (2), which is more bluish-white. Both of these stars are approximately 1000 light years away. In order to appear so bright, they both must generate much more light than the Sun. At a similar distance the Sun would be about 100 times dimmer than the faintest star visible to the naked eye. Betelgeuse is approximately 10,000 times brighter than the Sun and has a diameter which is from 500 to 1000 times that of the Sun. Betelgeuse does not shine with constant light intensity but varies its output by as much as a factor of two. Rigel is one of the most luminous objects in the sky with an output

of energy nearly 60,000 times that of the Sun. Its surface is much hotter and brighter than the surface of the Sun. Whereas the surface temperature of the Sun is 5800 deg. Kelvin and Betelgeuse's is 3100 deg. Kelvin, Rigel's is 12,000 deg. Kelvin.

Following Orion across the sky is the Big Dog (Canus Major) with the very bright star, Sirius, dominating this constellation. Sirius is the brightest of all stars in our Earthly skies. It is a close neighbour of the Solar System, being only nine light years away, and is really two stars orbiting each other with a period of 50 years. The dimmer of the two stars is a white dwarf, a star which is very small (size of the Earth) and dense. This star is the remnant of a nova explosion and is no longer generating energy in its core but only shines like a dying ember of a star.

Above Canus Major, and to the east of Orion, is Canus Minor in which only two stars stand out. The brighter of the two is Procyon, another neighbour of ours, 11 light years distant. It, as well as Sirius and Rigel, is a double star.

Outshining Sirius in the sky this winter are the two planets, Jupiter and Venus. Venus is in the southwest at sunset and will be getting higher and brighter every day throughout the winter. From January to April, it will brighten from 11 to 16 times the brightness of Sirius. By April it will be at its greatest elongation from the Sun and stand 40 degrees above the western horizon at sunset. In January, Jupiter is due south ("on the meridian" in astronomer's lingo) early in the evening and will set after midnight. On Sunday, March 6, Venus will move past Jupiter and be to the east of it. By April 1st, Jupiter will be setting shortly after the Sun.

Mercury is a difficult planet to observe and a good time to see it during an evening this year will occur in January. On January 26th, Mercury will be at its greatest elongation east and low in the southwest during evening twilight. Use binoculars to look for it three-quarters to one hour after sunset during the week of the 26th.

Much of the above information is available in the 1988 edition of the Observer's Handbook published by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. It's available in the Acadia Bookstore and some others. If you like keeping track of what is happening in the heavens, all the details are in this valuable volume. For brief general comments on the heavens, you should request the monthly publication SKY from the Astronomy Division of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8.

The best time to ski by moonlight is between the first quarter moon and the waning gibbous moon because the moon will be in the sky at convenient times during the evening. In January and February, this occurs in the first and last weeks of the month. Look for clear skies, good skiing, and rewarding observing.

(1) The name, Betelgeuse, is a degenerate form of the arabic description of the star's position with respect to the constellation figure, "Ibt al Jauzah", which means the Armpit of the Central One.

(2) The name, Rigel, comes from the first word of the arabic phrase, "Rijl Jauzah al Yusra", which means the Left Leg of the Jauzah (the Central One).

Observations of Neckbanded Canada Geese

by Bill and Brenda Thexton
Wolfville, Nova Scotia

On October 3rd, 1987, while birding at Lower Onslow, Colchester County, we observed approximately 1000 Canada Geese grazing in a grassy field near the highway. While viewing these birds with our binoculars, we observed that three of them were wearing yellow neckbands. By using a spotting scope we were able to read the alpha-numeric codes on the neckbands.

We returned to this area (Lower Onslow-Masstown) November 6th and November 13th and on both occasions observed marked geese in the flocks present. In all we identified eight different neckbanded geese. One individual was identified on two separate occasions (October 3rd and November 13th).

We contacted Peter Austin-Smith of the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests concerning these marked birds and he put us in contact with the New York Co-operative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York. We received a letter from Dr. Richard Malecki of Cornell which read, in part, as follows:

"The neckbanded geese you saw are part of a study being conducted on Canada Geese in the Atlantic flyway to learn more about their migration patterns, wintering distribution and survival. Geese have been neckbanded by state and federal personnel in eight states from New York to South Carolina. The information gathered from reports of these marked birds is helping biologists to better understand the dynamic aspects of our Canada Goose resource."

In addition, we were provided with the "histories" of five of the eight birds we observed (information concerning the other three birds will follow) including the age and sex of the bird, the date and location where it was banded and the dates and locations where the bird has subsequently been observed. Although two of the birds we identified had not been reported since they were neckbanded, two others have been reported on three occasions and one that had been neckbanded in North Carolina on February 16th, 1985, has subsequently been identified on five occasions in three states (Delaware, Maryland and New York) before our sighting here in Nova Scotia on October 3rd, 1987! The "histories" of these marked birds are summarized below:

Neckband Code	Sex	Age when Banded	Banded/Observed	
			Date	State/Province
7JAO	Female	Immature	21 Mar 84	New Jersey
			10 Mar 85	New York
			11 Jan 86	New York
			17 Jan 86	New York
			3 Oct 87	Nova Scotia



Neckband Code	Sex	Age when Banded	Banded/Observed	
			Date	State/Province
U5A5	Male	Adult	16 Feb 85	North Carolina
			3 Dec 85	Delaware
			22 Jan 86	Maryland
			9 Mar 86	New York
			6 Mar 87	Delaware
			9 Apr 87	New York
			3 Oct 87	Nova Scotia
J05P	Female	Adult	1 Mar 84?	New Jersey
			2 Oct 84	New Jersey
			8 Jan 85	New Jersey
			20 Apr 86	Quebec
			6 Nov 87	Nova Scotia
J3J5	Female	Adult	7 Mar 86	New Jersey
			3 Oct 87	Nova Scotia
			13 Nov 87	Nova Scotia
Y95F	Male	Adult	26 Jan 87	North Carolina
			6 Nov 87	Nova Scotia

In mid-September, 1987, five Canada Geese including one wearing a plastic neckband (J8A3) arrived on Tom Taylor's property north of Kentville and mingled with his pinioned flock of Canada Geese. The wild geese would leave in the morning but return in the evening. The neckbanded goose has continued this association with the pinioned geese to the present (late December, 1987).

So if you are observing flocks of Canada Geese, take some time to observe them carefully and see if any neckbanded individuals are present; if so, identify the codes on the neckbands. Reports of these birds provide scientists with valuable data and the historical information you will receive provides an added dimension to your birding activities. Information concerning observations of neckbanded Canada Geese should be forwarded to:

Dr. Richard Malecki
 Department of Natural Resources
 Fernow Hall
 Cornell University
 Ithaca, New York 14853



1987 End-of-the-Year Weather

by Larry Bogan
 Cambridge Station, N.S.

October through December is Autumn if you follow the astronomical definition of the seasons. That is difficult to believe this year because it has been winter in Nova Scotia since November. Below is a table of the weather statistics for those three months as taken by Ed Read at the Agricultural Research Centre in Kentville. The 30-year averages are shown, in parentheses, adjacent to the monthly data for 1987.

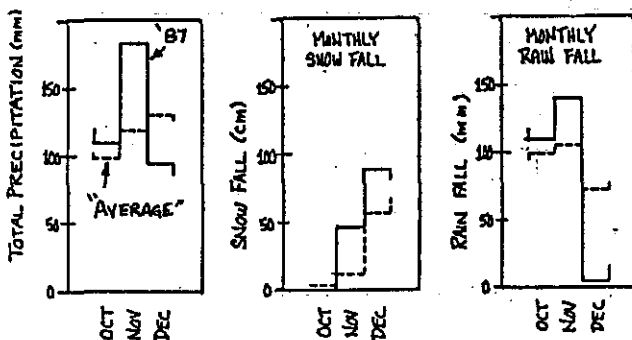
	Mean Temp. deg. C	Heating Deg-days (C-days)	Bright Sunshine Hours	Rain mm	Snow cm	Total* Precip mm
OCT	10.0(10.4)	247(236)	151(138)	109(98)	0(2)	109(100)
NOV	2.6(4.0)	462(422)	82(81)	139(106)	48(12)	187(118)
DEC	-2.4(-2.4)	633(620)	53(56)	5(73)	89(58)	94(131)
3-MONTH TOTAL		1342(1278)	286(275)	253(277)	137(72)	390(349)
FRACTION OF 30-YR. AVERAGE		1.05	1.04	0.91	1.90	1.12

* 1 cm snow equals approximately 1 mm rain

Except for a cold November we have had a rather "normal" autumn with respect to mean temperature. The total heat needed to keep our homes warm was only five percent higher than average. Since October was sunny and November and December were near the 30-year averages, the three months together had slightly above average bright sunshine hours. Solar home owners would have been happier had December been sunnier and October duller since sunshine is more useful in the colder December weather.

It is the precipitation that generally shows the greatest variation from the long-term average. This autumn we had a much higher snowfall and a lower rainfall than average. We had almost as much snowfall in November as we usually have in December. In December, the precipitation was 28 percent below average but with 53 percent more snow than usual. The net result was that the total snowfall for the period was 90 percent above average. On the average, 56 percent of the volume of precipitation in December is in the form of rain, but this year only four percent was rain. The lack of rain in December (seven percent of the norm) meant that very little of the abundant snowfall melted. Fortunately the winds in December were gentle and did not blow the white stuff around.

The late December snows have provided conditions for almost continuous recreational skiing. If you were out skiing, you probably noticed that streams and wet areas that are usually frozen were still open and hence impassable on skis. Snow is an excellent insulator and its continuous cover has kept our ground temperatures above freezing.



TRIVIAL TIDBITS

of Local Natural History

September 24, 1987 - December 31, 1987

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

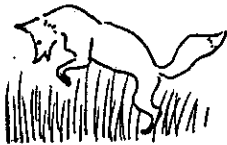
Date
(1987)



Obs

	Sep 24	-a dark-phase rough-legged hawk at Grand Pre	JGT
→		-a bull moose seen at Aaldersville	CIR
X	Sep 28	-2 ospreys, 650 km offshore, at southern edge of the Grand Banks	SS
	Oct 1	-a large snapping turtle (35-cm shell) in a yard in Lunenburg County	CC
X	Oct 3	-1000 Canada geese west of Truro, 3 wearing yellow neckbands (see separate article)	BBT
X	Oct 4	-a few spring peepers calling near Chester	BNS
		-3 turkey vultures, 400 blue jays on Brier Is.	CH
→		-a pied-billed grebe at Canning aboiteau	MG
	Oct 5	-3 very young netted stinkhorn fungi on Melanson Mountain	AA
→		-a merlin chasing American robins and rock doves in Wolfville	JW
X	early Oct	-a black bear cub seen, and black bears crossing highway regularly, at Aaldersville	BK,CIR
→	Oct 6	-a sandhill crane, east of Scotch Village	SC,LP
		-an adult northeastern pine sawyer beetle found near Wolfville	JW
X		-lots of (probable?) purple club fungi in Wolfville	JW
	Oct 7	-an all-white house sparrow at West Brooklyn	JGT
→	Oct 9	-a yellow-billed cuckoo in lower Canard Valley	JGT
		-about 200 monarch butterflies on Bon Portage Island	JSBo
X	Oct 10	-2 immature peregrine falcons, 1 yellow-billed cuckoo on Brier Island - also a great horned owl hooting at night	MT,JW
X		-8 white-tailed deer feeding in one field at Lake Ramsey	GTu
X	Oct 11	-a northern saw-whet owl tooting in morning turned out to be Roger Foxall! (He did hear one on Brier Island.)	JW
X		-several finback whales and a few humpback whales off Brier Island (and an exhausted American goldfinch landed on a whale-watcher!)	CH,NSBS,MT,JW
		-a yellow-billed cuckoo and a northern mockingbird on Brier Island	NSBS
→	Oct 12	-22 American wigeons, 37 greater yellowlegs in Canning	JW
		-1 stilt sandpiper, 5 lesser yellowlegs, 400 green-winged teal at Sheffield Mills	JW

- X Oct 12 -a hooded merganser at Canard Poultry Pond JW
 (cont) -an American coot and a ruddy duck at Canard Poul- JGT
 try Pond (also there Oct 15)
 -single yellow-billed cuckoos seen in Canning MG,TH
 and Port Williams
- Oct 8 -on Bon Portage Island, 56 Leach's storm-petrels,
 to 12 1 green-backed heron, 1 turkey vulture, 3 pere-
 grine falcons, several merlins, several yellow-
 billed cuckoos, 2 black-billed cuckoos, 1 gray-
 cheeked thrush, 2 white-eyed vireos, 1 orange-
 crowned warbler, 1 pine warbler, 1 yellow-breasted
 chat, 1 scarlet tanager, 2 rufous-sided towhees,
 several indigo buntings, 1 grasshopper sparrow,
 1 field sparrow, 1 clay-colored sparrow, 2
 white-crowned sparrows JSBo,PC,ME,EM,MZ et al.
 -a merlin pounced on an exhausted yellow-billed
 cuckoo sitting on a lobster trap, on Bon Portage
 Island PC
- Oct 13 -a black-billed cuckoo east of Canning BBT
 -a silver fox along the Canard River JGT
- Oct 14 -6 northern pintails at Canard Poultry Pond JW
- Oct 15 -a fox sparrow in Wolfville JSB
 -a bat flying in evening in Wolfville GT
- Oct 16 -a harbour porpoise swimming next to the Wellington
 Dyke (Canard aboiteau) (apparently it swam
 away Oct 17) CGE,MT,JW
- Oct 17 -lots of raccoon tracks in salt-marsh north of
 Avondale BNS
 -a yellow-billed cuckoo in Canning MG
 -a red fox hunting mice in tall grass near
 Mosherville BBT



- X Oct 18 -29 American wigeons, 1 northern shoveler, 29
 greater yellowlegs, 1 lesser yellowlegs in
 Canning JW
 -50 pectoral sandpipers, 4 lesser yellowlegs at
 Sheffield Mills JW
 -170 ring-billed gulls from Port Williams to
 Sheffield Mills JW
 -22 mallards near Starr's Point JW
 -1 American coot at Port Williams sewage ponds JW
 -1 rough-legged hawk in Canard Valley RS,JW
- Oct 19 -at Conrad's Beach (NE of Halifax), a snowy egret
 and an immature little blue heron JGT
 -a dickcissel in Halifax JGT
 -a northern mockingbird in Canning MD
- Oct 21 -4 cattle egrets northeast of Kentville JS
- Oct 23 -Blanding's turtles still active and courting in
 Kejimikujik National Park TP
- Oct 24 -a Say's phoebe photographed on Brier Island RS
 -lots of roadside beds of mayweed flowers in the
 Gaspereau-to-Canning area JW
 -8 common mergansers feeding on young gaspereau
 at White Rock JW

Oct 24	-flowers noted today: mayweed, Queen-Anne's-lace, (cont) wild radish, red clover, chicory, fleabane, small- flowered aster, seaside goldenrod	JW
	-a bufflehead and a lesser scaup at Canard Poul- try Pond	JW
	-at Sheffield Mills, a road-killed skunk, 4 wood ducks, 22 pectoral sandpipers, 6 common snipe, 3 lesser yellowlegs	JW
	-6 greater yellowlegs in Canning	JW
Oct 25	-a red-throated loon at Grand Pre	JW
	-several fox sparrows seen in Truro	MT
Oct 27	-3 cattle egrets still near Kentville	JS
	-a white heron or egret seen flying from Greenwich toward Kentville	JSB
Oct 28	-a red-tailed hawk seen hovering, then plunged to catch a small mammal, on Greenwich dykeland	JW
Oct 29	-on Bon Portage Island, 5 Leach's storm-petrels, to 25 northern saw-whet owls, 1 boreal owl, 1 yellow- bellied sapsucker, 1 northern mockingbird, 1 red- eyed vireo, 1 northern oriole, a few water pipits, 6 pine grosbeaks, and 1 indigo bunting	MZ et al.
Oct 31	-an injured snowy owl from Brier Island was given to Cyril Coldwell	CKC
	-250 Canada geese in a Windsor cornfield	BBT,MT
Nov 1	-a rufous-sided towhee in Wolfville	JSB
	-a northern shoveler in Canning, and lots of dun- lins and black-bellied plovers at Porter's Pt.	GF
	-21 snow buntings at Port Williams/Grand Pre	JW
	-a boreal owl was caught in a mist net on Bon Portage Island	PC,EM,PCS
Nov 2	-3 hooded mergansers west of Sheffield Mills	BBT
	-near Windsor, a "singing" flock of 125 red- winged blackbirds and 25 common grackles	BBT
Nov 4	-3 buffleheads at Port Williams sewage ponds	GF
	-400 Canada geese in Kingsport Sanctuary	DT
	-at Annapolis Royal, 125 buffleheads, 5 hooded mergansers, 2 scaups, and 1 pied-billed grebe	BBT
Nov 5	-a mink seen along main dyke at Wolfville	MT
Nov 6	-a snowy owl seen along dyke east of Wolfville	JN
	-1500 Canada geese west of Truro, 3 wearing yellow neckbands (see separate article)	BBT
	-also thousands of Canada geese in Wallace and Tatamagouche areas	BBT
	-Cyril Coldwell received an injured snowy owl from Starr's Point	CKC
Nov 8	-a male northern cardinal at Lumsden Reservoir	MB
	-a cattle egret just south of Port Williams	GF
	-at Canard Poultry Pond, 8 northern pintails, 8 lesser scaup, and 1 probable greater scaup	JW
	-at Sheffield Mills, larch trees very pretty with golden needles	JW
Nov 9	-another injured snowy owl received from Brier Island	CKC
Nov 12	-a northern shrike seen in Wolfville	PCS
	-a house sparrow with white wings in Wolfville	JT
Nov 13	-a cattle egret still at Port Williams	JW
Nov 14	-a dark-eyed junco singing in Wolfville	JW
	-a freshly built spider's web in Wolfville	JT
	-lots of pine siskins at Eva Urban's feeder in Avonport	SW

- Nov 15 -a hooded merganser at New Minas JW
 -11 lesser scaup, 1 very probable greater scaup, JW
 1 northern pintail at Canard Poultry Pond
 -1 northern shoveler, 2 northern pintails JW
 in Canning
 -1 wood duck, 6 common snipe, 6 killdeer at JW
 Sheffield Mills JW
 -375 Canada geese in Kingsport Sanctuary MG
 -a northern shrike and a dickcissel at Middleton GA
 -a snowy owl at West Brooklyn
 -Blanding's turtles still active, courting, and TP
 copulating in Kejimikujik National Park (water
 temperature 4 deg. C)
 Nov 17 -a snowy owl north of Hortonville; also 3 adult MB
 large diving beetles in a pond there
 Nov 18 -an active honeybee inside Biology Building at JW
 Acadia University (day extremely warm and
 windows open)
 -5 Canada geese northeast of Kentville, 1 with a BBT
 yellow neckband (that goose stayed until at RBA,RH
 least Dec 20)
 -a male painted bunting at a feeder in Hfx! (Seen by JW Nov 22. Look it up!)



- Nov 21 -a probable great egret seen with great blue JC
 herons near Digby EM
 Nov 22 -a northern shrike near Annapolis Royal DM
 -a brown thrasher and 3 separate pine warblers
 in Halifax SVK
 -a newly emerged adult tiger swallowtail in CKC
 Acadia University greenhouse
 Nov 28 -an eastern meadowlark east of Gaspereau JW
 -3 American coots at Sullivan's Pond in Dart- JW
 mouth; 1 common grackle and 3 red-winged black-
 birds at a feeder in Halifax GA
 Nov 29 -a juvenile snowy owl just west of Truro
 -at West Brooklyn, a sharp-shinned hawk caught
 and ate a blue jay (seen at very close range)
 Nov 30 -still hundreds of Canada geese west of Truro, BBT
 including some with yellow neckbands PY
 Dec 4 -a snowy owl at Grand Pre RBA
 -a Townsend's warbler in Halifax BBT
 Dec 8 -an American tree sparrow in Wolfville BBT
 Dec 10 -15 common grackles in Wolfville BBT
 Dec 11 -several hundred Canada geese in Tatamagouche
 Harbour BBT
 Dec 13 -a sandhill crane at Grand Pre BBT
 -an immature white-crowned sparrow plus a few
 Savannah sparrows at Canard Poultry Pond BLF
 Dec 14 -11 gray partridges near Starr's Point BBT
 Dec 15 -a light-coloured gyrfalcon just east of
 Wolfville PM,JGT

- Dec 18 -a yellow-breasted chat has been in Wolfville for a couple of weeks PCS
- X Dec 19 -Wolfville Christmas Bird Count - see article in this issue
- Dec 20 -an eastern meadowlark east of Hillaton (south east of Canning) and a ruby-crowned kinglet in Wolfville JGT
- -an immature, unbanded peregrine falcon at Sheffield Mills RM,PCS
- X -a seaside sparrow near Halifax RBA
- a white-throated sparrow singing in Wolfville BBT,MT,JW
- Dec 22 -in Wolfville, an immature Cape May warbler, a sharp-tailed sparrow, a chipping sparrow, and 3 swamp sparrows JW
- X -in Wolfville, 3 apples cached against trunk of a dead spruce tree (by a red squirrel?) JW
- at Grand Pre, at a field of uncut corn, a light gray gyrfalcon, a northern goshawk chasing rock doves, and at least 2 rusty blackbirds JGT
- Dec 23 -a sandhill crane at Grand Pre JL
- Dec 24 -a great blue heron, northern shrike, and 5 rusty blackbirds at Grand Pre RS
- a short-eared owl at Grand Pre JW
- Dec 25 -5 common grackles and a red-winged blackbird at Port Williams LC
- a creamy-white house sparrow at Avonport EU
- X Dec 26 -3 purple finches in Wolfville MT,JW
- Dec 28 -at 8 a.m., hundreds of flying American crows, all heading west over Wolfville, undoubtedly from Boot Island roost MT,JW
- at noon, a few hundreds of American crows flying in all directions over Wolfville MT
- Dec 29 -on Brier Island, a rufous-sided towhee, a snowy owl, a northern harrier, a bufflehead and a black-headed gull RS,JW
- a hermit thrush in a Halifax yew JGT
- X -15 snow buntings at a Wolfville feeder MT
- Dec 30 -8 American robins in Wolfville, on an extremely cold, windy, snowed-in day BF
- Dec 31 -a light-gray gyrfalcon at Grand Pre HF



Contributors (Thank you all!)

AA	Albert Atwell	DM	Don MacNeill
GA	George Alliston	EM	Erich Muntz
RBA	Rare Bird Alert	PM	Peter MacLeod
JSB	Sherman Bleakney	RM	Randy Milton
JSBo	Sherman Boates	JN	Janet Ness
MB	Mike Boudreau	LP	Lolita Parker
CC	Curtis Chipman	TP	Terry Power
CKC	Cyril Coldwell	CIR	Chris & Ian Ross
JC	Joan Comeau	BNS	Blomidon Naturalists Soc.
LC	Lana Churchill	JS	Jack Scott
PC	Peter Comeau	NSBS	Nova Scotia Bird Society
SC	Sheila Connell	PCS	Peter Smith
MD	Mike Dadswell	RS	Richard Stern
CGE	Carol Lee	SS	Sean Smith
	& Gordon Elliot	BBT	Brenda & Bill Thexton
ME	Mark Elderkin	DT	Dan Toews
BF	Bob Flecknell	GT	Gerry Trueman
BLF	Bernard Forsythe	GTu	Glenn Turner
GF	George Forsyth	JGT	Judy & Gordon Tufts
HF	Harold Forsyth	JT	Jean Timpa
MG	Merritt Gibson	MT	Miriam Tams
CH	Carl Haycock	EU	Eva Urban
RH	Ray Helpard	JW	Jim Wolford
TH	Tom Herman	SW	Sherman Williams
BK	Betty Keddy	PY	Paul Yates
SVK	Sam Vander Kloet	MZ	Marion Zinck
JL	Jenny Lee		

ARTICLES



Little Packages

by Jean Timpa
Wolfville, N.S.

In November I set up my winter bird feeding station in the front yard cherry tree. Predictably the Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees arrived within hours.

Several days later two nine-year-old girls were waiting outside my home for their classmate who lives upstairs. I was on my way out to replenish the feeders when I suddenly thought maybe, just maybe, we could have some fun with the chickadees. First I showed Beth and Andrea how to take a handful of sunflower seed and quietly stand by the hedgerow where the chickadees like to sit and crack open their seeds.

At first the girls couldn't believe it was possible to have a wild bird alight on their hand. I demonstrated first and, thankfully, a little, bright-eyed ball of feathers barely lit on my outstretched hand, snatched a seed and was off into the bushes. By this time the two irrepressible redheads were bouncing up and down wanting to be next. The girls wanted to know if the birds would bite or how it would

feel when the chickadees landed on them. Andrea was successful first and the excitement in her eyes and tone of voice certainly matched that of any child I have ever seen on Christmas morning. On the second visit to Andrea's hand the chickadee, for some reason, stayed a while and fussily sorted through the seeds until it found just the right one and carried it away.

"Did you see how long it stayed?", exclaimed an awe-struck Andrea. She could hardly believe a wild bird had actually been sitting on her hand.

Beth fed several chickadees too, before it was time to go to school. A bubbly, chattery, child, she found it very difficult to stop talking long enough to attract the bird. She was well rewarded, however, and her first reaction was, "Oh, I was afraid I'd giggle or talk and scare it off!".

I also mentioned the possibility of feeding chickadees by hand to an older gentleman in town. Several days later, he also reported the thrill of hand feeding these birds.

Have any readers of this Newsletter discovered other wild birds that are easy to tame other than Gray Jays? I wonder particularly about Boreal Chickadees. Has anyone had any experience with them?

N.S. Conservation

The Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests publication N.S. Conservation may be obtained free by writing to:

N.S. Conservation
P.O. Box 68
Truro, Nova Scotia
B2N 5B8

and asking to be placed on their mailing list. This publication "is dedicated to the understanding and wise use of Nova Scotia's wildlife and forest resources". Published four times a year, this informative document contains valuable information for those interested in natural history and conservation.



Errata - Volume 14, Number 3, September 1987

On page 25, in "Contributors" to Trivial Tidbits,

"GF" should have been "George Forsyth"
"HF" should have been "Harold Forsyth"
both without the final "e"

and "MT" should, of course, have been "Miriam Tams".

Our apologies.

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