

December 1990  
Volume 17 No. 4



**BLOMIDON NATURALISTS  
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

**BNS Winter 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 21 -- Members Night, in Room 308, Patterson Hall (Acadia University Biology Building). This annual feature is enjoyed by all who attend. As in the past, please bring some natural history (up to ten slides, interesting observations, finds, photos, books, etc.) and/or a friend. We are planning to organize this information exchange a bit differently this year so that it runs more smoothly and ends at a reasonable hour.

2. February 18 -- The Best of Bernard Forsythe: a selection of slides and natural history observations. Well-known naturalist (and BNS member) Bernard Forsythe will select from his extensive experience of natural history. Be prepared for tips on everything from tree climbing to obscure forms of rare orchids.

3. March 18 -- Views of Newfoundland. BNS member, Pat McLeod will make a presentation based on twenty years in Newfoundland. Many will remember the excellent slides she has shown on Members' Nights and those that have read her book on Gros Morne will know that we are in for a real treat.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

PROGRAMME: Winter 1991

Evening Programme.....cover

Field Trips..... 3

Acadia Biology Seminars..... 3

Newsletter and Society Notice..... 4

**BNS BUSINESS AND NEWS**

Acknowledgements..... 5

Margaret and Curtis Chipman, Honoured by the BNS.... 5

Robie Tufts Young Naturalists Award..... 6

Notes from BNS Directors..... 6

BNS Executive..... 8

BNS Audited Financial Statements, 1989-1990..... 9

BNS Members Support of "Guardian of the Amazon".....10

BNS Newsletter Submissions Deadline- March 1, 1991..10

**SPECIAL NOTICES**

In Memory of Mary Forbes.....11

Baillie Fund Grants Available for Bird Projects....11

**FIELD TRIP REPORTS**

Shorebirds and Brown Ducks - Sept.30,1990.....12

Greenwich Historical Walk - Oct. 20, 1990.....13

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS**

Wolfville Christmas Bird Count, Dec.20,1990.....14

West Hants Christmas Bird Count, Dec.30,1990.....16

Brier Island Christmas Bird Count, Dec.18,1990.....17

**NATURE REPORTS and ARTICLES**

Red-bellied Woodpecker in Truro.....17

Ice Structures in Frozen Soil.....18

Comet Levy's Rendezvous.....19

Weather Statistics - End of 1990 .....22

The Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora - Conservation....23

Robie Tufts Method .....25

The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avoider by Ogden Nash.26

**TRIVIAL TIDBITS**

Skies, Fungi, and Plants.....27

Marine Invertebrates and insects.....27

Amphibians, Reptiles and Mammals.....28

Birds .....29

Contributors.....37

Advertisements.....38

Membership Blank.....39

Sources of Local Natural History Information.....40



-----  
Field Trips  
-----

Unless otherwise noted, all times given are for meeting at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre parking lot. NOTE THE CHANGE OF LOCATION. Leaders' telephone numbers are included to allow those without access to local news to confirm trips.

1. Sunday, January 20, 1:00 p.m. -- Moosehorn Lake with Sherman Bleakney (542-3604). Ski, snowshoe, walk - depending on snowfall and your own skills! Our traditional way to begin the new year.

2. Sunday, February 17, 10:00 a.m. -- Wintering Raptors of Kings County with Merritt Gibson (582-7569). A bus trip through eastern Kings County to see hawks and eagles. Bring an ice scraper for the bus window, a donation for the bus, and your lunch to be eaten at the Acadia Biology Building where displays of what you have seen will be presented.

3. Saturday, March 2, 1:00 p.m. -- Winter Tree and Shrub Identification in Greenwich with George Forsyth (542-7116). Can you tell a maple from an ash without the leaves? Learn some new ways to identify some of our plant life. Bring a magnifying glass and (remember to study for the test at the end of class!).

4. Sunday, March 17, 9:00 a.m. -- Wintering Waterfowl of the Annapolis Basin, Annapolis Royal to Digby. With a combination of salt and fresh water in Annapolis, Bernard Forsythe hopes to show you grebes, loons, mergansers and ten species of ducks. Because of potentially unsettled weather, please preregister with Bernard (542-2427). Bring warm clothing, your lunch and binoculars.

5. Saturday, April 13, 1:00 p.m. -- My Backyard at Horton Bluff with Sherman Williams (542-5104). Sherman presented a tremendous slide show of the wanderings of a naturalist in his own backyard at the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists meeting last June. He will repeat the show, this time for real. Come and see the beauty and share Sherman's discoveries at Horton Bluff and Blue Beach.

Acadia Biology Seminar Club

The Acadia Biology Seminar Club meets weekly on Thursdays, in Room 308, Patterson Hall, at 4:45 p.m. All interested persons, including members of the public, are encouraged to attend. Refreshments are served prior to the lecture. Following is a list of upcoming seminars:

Jan 17 Dr. Nick Hill, Dept. of Biology, Mount Saint Vincent University  
"Predicting and Protecting Rarities"

- Jan 24 Jack Lawson, Ph.D. candidate, Memorial University  
Subject: research in seal biology
- Jan 31 Dr. AnnMarie Taylor, DVM, Dalhousie University  
Subject: ethics in using animals for research
- Feb 7 Carl Haycock, Brier Island Ocean Study  
Subject: whales
- Feb 14 To be announced
- Feb 21 Spring Break - no lecture
- Feb 28 Dr. Nancy Nickerson, Agriculture Canada, Kentville  
"Some Personal Perspectives on Life as a Research  
Scientist"
- Mar 5 Student presentations by those attending  
TUESDAY the undergraduate conference AUUC 91

VOLUME 17  
NUMBER 4  
DECEMBER 1990

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 a member of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, an Affiliated Member of the Canadian Nature Federation and a member of the Nova Scotia Trails Federation.

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

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

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to:

our speakers: Tom Herman, Mary Primrose and Fred Scott for varied and thought-provoking fall programs;

our retiring Board of Directors members: Pat Clifford, Miriam Tams, Judy Tufts, Sherman Williams, and Marian Zinck. Their work on our behalf is much appreciated; without members willing to serve, the Society would cease to function;

the Christmas Bird Count Committee - Sherman Boates, Bernard Forsythe, Merritt Gibson, Richard Stern, and Gordon Tufts - for administering the Count;

Jim Wolford, for assisting the Christmas Bird Count Committee;

all those who brought food for the Christmas Bird Count supper;

all our Newsletter contributors.

Margaret and Curtis Chipman  
Honoured by the Blomidon Naturalists Society

by Merritt Gibson  
Canning, N.S.

At the October, 1990, meeting of the Blomidon Naturalists Society, Honorary Life Memberships were awarded to Margaret and Curtis Chipman. Honorary Life Membership is awarded to individuals in recognition of their support of the Society and/or their contributions to natural history.

The Chipmans enjoy the out-of-doors, and their interests range from gardening to long walks and bird watching. They joined the Blomidon Naturalists Society in 1976 and since then have been enthusiastic supporters of our work. In June, 1990, the BNS hosted the inaugural meetings of the Nova Scotia Federation of Naturalists. The Chipmans graciously served as Honorary Chairpersons of those meetings.

Previously, Honorary Membership has been awarded to: Robie Tufts (1981), John Erskine (1981), Ken Harrison (1983), Rachel Erskine (1983), Albert Roland (1985), Jean Timpa (1988), Cyril Coldwell (1988), and C.R.K. Allen (1989).

## Robie Tufts Young Naturalists Award

by Sherman Williams  
Avonport, N.S.

Each year, in memory of Robie Tufts, the Blomidon Naturalists Society seeks out and gives recognition to a promising young naturalist. This year the Award Committee selected Mathew Buntain of West Brooklyn as the recipient.

Mathew is indeed a promising young naturalist with a strong awareness of the important responsibility we have in protecting our environment. At the age of fourteen, Mathew already has the experience of a broad view of Canada. He was born in Manitoba and shortly thereafter moved to Faro, Yukon Territory, where he spent his formative years in this beautiful "last frontier" of Canada. In 1985 Mathew, his parents and his sister travelled all the way across Canada to settle in Nova Scotia. Mathew is now a grade nine student in the Hantsport School.

Mathew is a member of the BNS and is a keen participant in some of the field trips. He enjoys reading about the environment, his favourite sources being National Geographic and Equinox. He is particularly skillful in putting his thoughts into words. This skill was demonstrated when he delivered a winning speech on nature and the environment at his school. He was later asked to give this address during special ceremonies at the launching of the Kings County Blue Box recycling program. This skill has no doubt also contributed to his ability to lead others. Last year he helped lead his school in becoming involved in a Waste Management for Schools program, sponsored by the Education Committee of the Land Resources Co-ordinating Council. Mathew and his group did such a successful job that their school received an award.

Mathew has demonstrated a broad interest in natural history and a deep commitment to the environment. He is indeed a worthy recipient of the Robie Tufts Young Naturalists Award.

Congratulations, Mathew, and we wish you the very best in pursuing your knowledge of the natural world and your continued commitment to the environment!

### Notes from the BNS Directors

by Tom Herman  
Kentville, N.S.

The BNS Executive met twice during the fall, on October 11 and November 9. Sessions were busy and varied. We reviewed regular items of business including reports from the Treasurer, Newsletter Editors, Program Committee and Robie Tufts Award Committee. Additional agenda items were Chimney Swift Project (Robie Tufts Nature Centre), Christmas Bird Count and our affiliation with the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists.

We established a standing committee (the Nature Centre Committee) to look after the Robie Tufts Nature Centre. At present the committee includes Harold Forsyth (chair), Peter Austin-Smith, Peter MacDonald, Sherman Boates and Jim Wolford. The committee will be responsible for preparing and maintaining display panels at the centre. Two panels, one on eagles and one on Robie Tufts, are presently in preparation. The committee encourages all members to submit ideas and/or material for additional displays, and to participate in their design and construction. We are also in the process of purchasing a tide clock for the centre.

A new committee was also struck to organize the Christmas Bird Count. Members of the committee were Merritt Gibson, Sherman Boates, Bernard Forsythe, Gordon Tufts and Richard Stern. Its work included redrawing the ancestral area boundaries (amidst mixed grumbling and acclaim), assigning these areas to counters, and arranging for compilation of count data.

Peter MacDonald, Secretary to the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, reported that an annual fee structure for the FNSN had been set at \$100 per member organization and for individual memberships: \$12 regular, \$10 seniors/students, and \$15 family. We agreed that the BNS would pay the \$100 member organization fee. We also agreed that our representative to the FNSN (Sherman Williams at present) should become an ex-officio member of the BNS Board of Directors.

It was with great pleasure during the October 11 meeting that the Directors decided to award Honourary Life Memberships in the Society to Curtis and Margaret Chipman for their contributions to natural history and their support of the Society.

The Directors were also pleased to extend thanks to George Fraser for the generous gift of his auditing skills over the years. We decided that a dinner for two at the Tattlingstone Inn seemed an appropriate token of our appreciation.

One of the last cock pheasants to be mounted by Robie Tufts was recently donated to the BNS by Ralph and Jean Winter. The Directors extended thanks to the Winters on behalf of the Society, and have decided to use the gift to raise funds for the Robie Tufts Nature Centre.

The Directors also responded to a request from the Nova Scotia Museum regarding a provincial bird for Nova Scotia. The Museum's committee is recommending to the provincial government adoption of the osprey and has requested our support. After much discussion we decided to support the Museum's choice; we hope that this is satisfactory to the membership.

Members of the new Program Committee are Sherman Boates (chair), George Forsyth and Jim Wolford. Members of the new Robie Tufts Award Committee are Pat McLeod, Lana Churchill and Sherman Williams.

The Directors are anxious to serve the BNS membership. We welcome suggestions from members at any time, and are always seeking individuals who would like to become involved in Society activities, especially membership in future Boards of Directors. Don't be shy!

Blomidon Naturalists Society  
Executive -- 1990-1991

At our annual meeting in October, the following executive was elected for 1990-1991.

President

Tom Herman Home: 678-0383  
40 Elm Avenue  
Kentville, N.S. B4N 1Y9

Vice President

George E. Forsyth Home: 542-7116  
Box 268  
Port Williams, N.S. B0P 1T0

Past-President

Peter Austin-Smith Home: 542-2109  
Box 294  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Treasurer

Harold Forsyth Home: 542-5983  
R.R. 2  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Secretary

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

Directors

J. Sherman Boates Home: 542-2361  
Department of Biology  
Acadia University  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Peter MacDonald Home: 542-5958  
Box 1328  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Pat McLeod Home: 542-7075  
R.R. 1  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Mary Pratt Home: 542-4220  
R.R. 1  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Jim Wolford Home: 542-7650  
Department of Biology  
Acadia University  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Barry Yoell Office: 542-3633  
R.R. 1  
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0



Newsletter Editors

George and Margaret Alliston Home: 542-3651  
R.R. 3  
Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0

Pamphlets and Special Publications

Merritt Gibson Home: 582-7569  
Box 35  
Canning, N.S. BOP 1H0

Blomidon Naturalists Society  
P.O. Box 127  
Wolfville, Nova Scotia BOP 1X0

Audited Financial Statements - 1989-1990

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

September 1, 1989 - August 31, 1990

INCOME

Membership Dues	\$1882.00
Bank Interest	18.68
Audubon "Christmas Bird Count" Fees rc'vd	196.00
Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists Conf	714.95
Field-trip Bus Donations	79.50
Advertising - <u>Newsletter</u>	250.00
	-----
	\$3141.13

EXPENSES

Awards and Meetings	\$101.46
Newsletters and Programmes	1801.58
Audubon "Christmas Bird Count" Fees Paid	196.00
Membership Fees	115.00
Bus Trip	100.00
	-----
	\$2314.04

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENSE \$827.09

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash \$1249.18

LIABILITIES

In Trust for Guardians of the Amazon 10.00

SOCIETY'S EQUITY

Balance September 1, 1989	\$412.09
Add: Excess of Income over expense	827.09
	-----
	\$1249.18

Treasurer - Judith C. Tufts (signed)

My examination of the records of BNS included such tests as I considered necessary in the circumstances. The statements represent the financial position of the organization at year end 1990.

George Fraser (signed)

### BNS Members Support "Guardian of the Amazon" Program

by George Alliston  
West Brooklyn, N.S.

At the October meeting of the BNS, a collection was made in support of the "Guardian of the Amazon" program which is sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). To help save the Amazon rainforest, which is currently disappearing at the rate of 50 acres per minute, WWF is helping nine Amazonian nations strengthen their conservation programs. Co-operative activities include:

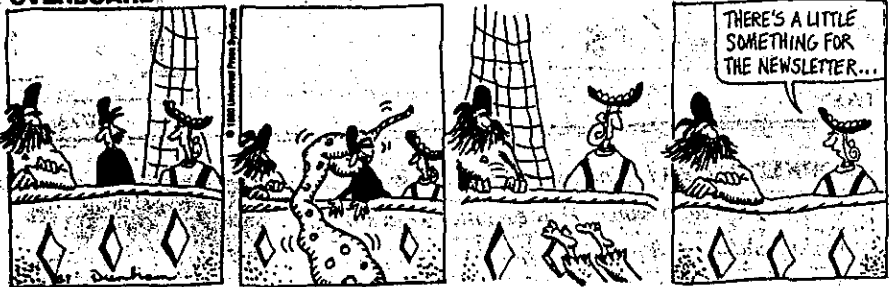
- saving endangered species and important natural areas
- promoting environmental education
- tackling the foreign debt burden
- avoiding unsound foreign aid proposals.

The WWF is attempting to raise three million dollars each year to sponsor its 266 projects in the Amazon.

Members dug deeply into their pockets that night and a cheque for \$206 was forwarded to the WWF. As a symbolic gesture, the WWF will be sending your Society a certificate indicating that our donation has been used to protect eight acres of rainforest in the Amazon.

Thank you all for your generous contributions!

#### OVERBOARD



BNS Newsletter Submissions Deadline - March 1, 1991

Please send or give all contributions to the Newsletter  
to:

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

Send submissions for "Trivial Tidbits" only, one species per 3" by 5" index card, to Jim Wolford at:

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

Last-minute observations can be phoned in to 542-2201, ext. 334 (leave a message) or 542-7650 (late evening to midnight).

The editors would greatly appreciate submissions being at least double-spaced to facilitate both editing and word processing. If you are able to submit articles in word-processed form, please contact the editors for technical details. Sketches or diagrams should be submitted in final form, preferably on a separate page.

-----  
SPECIAL NOTICES  
-----

**In Memory of Mary Forbes**

by Merritt Gibson  
Canning, N.S.

Mrs. Mary Forbes of Wolfville died on Christmas Day, 1990, at the age of 102. Mrs. Forbes had a special interest in birds. She was a founding member of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

My records show that Mrs. Forbes took part in the Wolfville Christmas Bird Count in 1949, and she undoubtedly took part in earlier Counts for which I do not have records. Each year since that time she contributed a list of the birds seen at her feeder. Again for this year's Count, held on December 22, a list of the birds at her feeder was submitted by Mrs. Forbes and her daughter.

Through the years, the Wolfville area has had a number of people who were willing to share their interests in natural history with young people. Mrs. Forbes was one of them. I recall visiting her when I was in school, sitting on the veranda of her home on Linden Avenue, and talking to her about the birds that I had seen. I know that other naturalists who grew up in Wolfville at that time now have similar memories.

**Baillie Fund Grants Available for Bird Projects in 1991**

Do you have plans for an individual or club project on birds that needs some extra funding? The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for Bird Research and Preservation may be able to help. You are invited to apply for a grant.

Grants are offered for support of research, conservation or educational projects on Canadian birds. Projects must be conducted in Canada or on Canadian birds on their wintering grounds or migration routes. Applications may be submitted by individuals or organizations. Preference will be given to projects conducted by amateurs, to those using data collected by volunteers, and to those not eligible for other fund-

ing. Grants are usually in the range of \$200-\$2,000 and average about \$1,000. Grants are made annually, but multi-year support will be considered. Applications must be submitted on forms available from the Secretary of the Fund and should be received by January 31, 1991.

Baillie Fund application forms and instructions may be obtained from Mark Stabb, Secretary, James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario NOE 1M0 (Telephone: 519-586-3531). The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund is funded primarily by Long Point Bird Observatory and co-operating naturalists' clubs from proceeds from Canada's annual Baillie Birdathon. By taking part in the Birdathon, individuals and clubs can help support the Fund and clubs can keep a share of the proceeds for their own projects. Information on participation in the Birdathon may be obtained from Doug McRae, Birdathon Co-ordinator, at the same address as the Fund (above).

Ed. Note: Last year, the Baillie Fund provided a grant of \$2,200 for our Chimney Swift Project.

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

Shorebirds and Brown Ducks  
Joint NSBS/BNS Field Trip  
September 30, 1990

by Jim Wolford  
Wolfville, N.S.

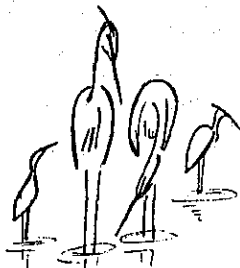
The first stop for the 35 to 40 participants in 17 cars was at our Robie Tufts Nature Centre. Then we drove to Grand Pre to search the dykelands (unsuccessfully) for shorebirds. However, many people had good looks at numerous ravens in one grassy field. At least four northern harriers, two red-tailed hawks and an American kestrel were seen on stops to scan the fields.

On or near Boot Island were a group of ten great blue herons, six double-crested cormorants, 40+ moulting common eiders, a white-winged scoter and two adult bald eagles.

At the east end of Evangeline Beach, we were disappointed in the numbers and species diversity of shorebirds: 25 golden plovers, ten semi-palmated plovers, one dunlin, no black-bellied plovers(!), eight sanderlings, and about 20 "peeps". A few of us saw a very small merlin chasing the peeps. A few palm and myrtle warblers were also seen.

After lunch we did a "pit stop" at Grand Pre Historic Park and received some free apples - a nice bonus! Then popular demand required a stop for "organic" ice cream cones at Ma's Farm Market.

Two more northern harriers were seen in the Canard



Valley on our way to Harris' Pond in Canning. There we found lots of the predictable "brown, challenging" ducks, most of them black ducks and green-winged teal, with eight mallards and six blue-winged teal. We also saw a great blue heron, ten ring-billed gulls, three greater yellowlegs, two common snipe, three pectoral sandpipers, two killdeer, red-winged blackbirds, and song and swamp sparrows.

In the farm yard at the west end of the pond, we saw large flocks of rock doves and European starlings; among the latter were good numbers of cowbirds.

At Canard Poultry Pond there were many gulls and very few ducks, mostly green-winged teal and a single northern pintail.

Our final stop was the relatively new Ducks Unlimited pond along the Cornwallis River at New Minas (new bridge). The occupants of the few cars still with us saw an American bittern and nine northern pintails (perhaps a local brood?).

Generally we had a pleasant day with good viewing conditions but very low numbers of shorebirds - just unlucky timing?

### Greenwich Historical Walk

October 20, 1990

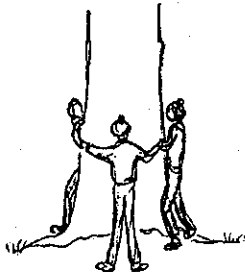
by George Forsyth  
Port Williams, N.S.

Poor weather and little advertising resulted in a small turnout; however, a hardy group of six walked through five hundred years of history and were home in time for lunch.

We started at the junction of the Port Williams dyke road and the D.A.R. and walked west toward Neary Brook and the Pines. The railroad and dykes have changed the landscape from when the Acadians first settled in the 1680's. Originally the tidal influence would have been much greater, creating a grand salt marsh and estuary at the mouth of the brook. The two Acadian houses that rested on the foundations still visible on the hillside would have overlooked a small meadow created by dyking the end of the brook.

There is evidence of a mill site (dam, sluiceway, foundation) that was used by John Bishop in the 1780's. His mill was probably on the site of an Acadian mill. Still growing about this "settlement" are such introduced plant species as European hawthorn, Crataegus monogyna; bitter nightshade, Solanum dulcarnara; and black locust, Robinia pseudoacacia.

We walked from this historical area through very scrubby woods and reached the top of a hill from which we could look down into the "Neary Pines", an area of virgin forest. The "Neary Pines" is a small pocket of woods that has escaped forest fire, budworm infestations and the axe. Three species (white pine, Pinus strobus; eastern hemlock, Tsuga canadensis; and a few red pine, Pinus resinosa) are the dominant trees in this stand. These trees are



massive; it took three of us joining hands to circumscribe many of the trunks!

We were able to visit the cemetery of the Horton Poor Farm. From 1882 to 1922, a farm was maintained in Greenwich for keeping the poor and "idiots" of Horton Township. The farm was located close to Pulsifer's Greenhouses, but the cemetery (still owned by the municipality) was north of the railroad overlooking the Cornwallis River. It is a simple cemetery consisting of earthen mound graves with slate rocks as markers. Most people walking through the woods would probably pass without realizing it was there. Very recently the cemetery has been desecrated by vandals who dug up three of the unmarked graves. For what purpose? We can only guess.

As we returned to our cars we followed a wooded path to a knoll overlooking the river and indeed the whole of the Cornwallis estuary. We could see, without binoculars, Grand Pre, Boot Island, and the silos that mark Palmeters' farm on Long Island. As late as the 1920's, the Micmacs used this knoll for a summer encampment. Here we saw an immature bald eagle playing on the gusts of wind along the river. Was he a reincarnation of the spirit of a past visitor to this knoll?

-----  
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS  
-----

Wolfville Christmas Bird Count  
December 22, 1990

by Richard Stern  
Kentville, N.S.  
compiled by Gordon Tufts  
Wolfville, N.S.

Saturday, December 22, 1990, was the last shopping day before Christmas Eve but that did not stop a dedicated band of bird enthusiasts from spending from dawn to dusk counting the bird population within a 7.5 mile radius of Greenwich and encompassing Canning, Kentville, New Minas, Wolfville, Grand Pre, Black River and all the surrounding woods, fields dykes, ditches, rivers and backyard feeders. The weather could not have been more of a contrast to last year when frigid temperatures, wind and snow prevailed. This year mild temperatures (up to 12.5 deg C), drizzle and fog made it seem more like an April day than three days before Christmas. There had been no snow cover at all, so there was a good supply of natural food available to seed-eating birds, and there was an abundant supply of open water, so water birds were spread out and not forced into small ice-free ponds and creeks as so often happens. The main weather-related problems were firstly the day-long drizzle, which made conditions for those on foot miserable, and, secondly, the fog which settled in by afternoon, that made the viewing of shorebirds and seabirds impossible and other species (raptors, crows, etc.) difficult.

Participants in this year's bird count included 49 field observers in 22 to 25 parties, plus 23 feeder observers.

Total party hours were 147 (71 on foot, 76 by car), and total party miles were 638 (70 on foot, 568 by car).

A total of 46,769 birds of 62 species were observed on count day and 14 individuals of three additional species were observed during count week. This is, by a small margin, the lowest total birds counted for some years and the species count, while being on the low side, is within the average range.

There were some notable absences. There were no observations of Loons, Cormorants or Herons, and shorebirds of any kind (probably, in part, due to the heavy fog that prevailed in their habitats). No Barred, Great Horned or Long-eared Owls were seen or heard. Although there were eight Northern Flickers, there were no Pileated Woodpeckers. There were also no Snow Buntings.

As is now the custom, after dusk the participants gathered in the Ornithology Lab at Acadia University for excellent chowder, Mexican soup and desserts, and to tally the count. Thanks must go to the committee that organized the count, allocated areas and arranged the food.

Let's hope for a good count next year!

Canada Goose.....	295	A	Red-breasted Nuthatch	14
Green-winged Teal.....	7		Wh.-breasted Nuthatch	10
American Black Duck... 1,087		A	Brown Creeper.....	6
Mallard.....	18		Golden-crowned Kinglet	91 A
Northern Pintail.....	CW		American Robin.....	21 A
White-winged Scoter... CW			Northern Mockingbird..	2
Common Merganser.....	4	L	Bohemian Waxwing.....	32
Bald Eagle.....	108	H	Cedar Waxwing.....	6
Northern Harrier.....	7		Northern Shrike.....	4 H
Sharp-shinned Hawk....	5		European Starling.....	5,285 L
Northern Goshawk.....	1		Yellow-rumped Warbler	5
Red-tailed Hawk.....	81	L	Orange-crowned warbler	CW
Merlin.....	2		Common Yellowthroat...	1
Rough-legged Hawk.....	11		Northern cardinal.....	1
Ring-necked Pheasant.. 161		L	American Tree Sparrow	106
Ruffed Grouse.....	2		Savannah Sparrow.....	12
Ring-billed Gull.....	1,056	H	Song Sparrow.....	104
Herring Gull.....	10,163	H	Swamp Sparrow.....	11 H
Iceland Gull.....	11	H	White-throated Sparrow	17
Great Bl.-backed Gull 1,720		A	Dark-eyed Junco.....	564 A
Rock Dove.....	1,511		Rusty Blackbird.....	2
Mourning Dove.....	400		Red-winged Blackbird..	5
Short-eared Owl.....	3		Blackbird species.....	4
Downy Woodpecker.....	22		Common Grackle.....	2
Hairy Woodpecker.....	9		Brown-headed Cowbird..	289
Northern flicker.....	8	H	Northern Oriole.....	1
Horned Lark.....	9		Purple Finch.....	27
Gray Jay.....	4		House Finch.....	2
Blue Jay.....	551	A	Pine Siskin.....	176
American Crow.....	9,575	L	American Goldfinch....	679
Common Raven.....	299		Evening Grosbeak.....	866 H
Bl.-capped Chickadee.. 755		H	House Sparrow.....	536 L
Boreal Chickadee.....	3			

NUMBER OF SPECIES..... 62      NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 46,769  
(+3-CW)

CW - Count Week: the 3 days before and the 3 days after the Count Day  
 A - Average numbers      H - High numbers      L - Low numbers

West Hants Christmas Bird Count  
 December 30, 1990

by Karen Leigh Casselman  
 Cheverie, N.S.

Twenty-four participants from Kings, Hants and Halifax Counties combined their skills to tally an alltime high total of 56 species on the fifth annual West Hants Christmas Bird Count. A windless day with an overcast sky and temperatures hovering at 8 deg C may have done the trick. Among the highlights were a Clay-coloured Sparrow, Harlequin Duck, Hooded Merganser and six Spruce Grouse. While Pileated Woodpeckers were down to a mere ten, an obliging Great Horned Owl called minutes before midnight to become eligible as species # 56. Count Week birds included two Merlin and a Northern Saw-whet Owl, loquacious at 5:00 a.m. the day after the count.

Red-throated Loon.....		3 Northern flicker.....	1
Common Loon.....	1 CW	Pileated Woodpecker.....	10
Canada Goose.....		4 Gray Jay.....	8
American Black Duck...	1,932	Blue Jay.....	330
Mallard.....		3 American Crow.....	463
Common Eider.....		1 Common Raven.....	219
Harlequin Duck.....		1 Bl.-capped Chickadee..	281
Common Merganser.....	218	Boreal Chickadee.....	18
Hooded Merganser.....		1 Red-breasted Nuthatch	41
Bald Eagle.....		4 Wh.-breasted Nuthatch	7
Northern Harrier.....		1 Brown Creeper.....	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk....		1 Golden-crowned Kinglet	92
Northern Goshawk.....		1 American Robin.....	26
Red-tailed Hawk.....	16	Cedar Waxwing.....	103
American Kestrel.....		1 Northern Shrike.....	3
Merlin.....	2 CW	European Starling.....	1,763
Ring-necked Pheasant..	37	American Tree Sparrow	38
Spruce Grouse.....		6 Clay-coloured Sparrow	1
Ruffed Grouse.....		9 Song Sparrow.....	24
Purple Sandpiper.....	18	Dark-eyed Junco.....	33
Ring-billed Gull.....	148	Snow Bunting.....	193
Herring Gull.....	899	Red-winged Blackbird..	2
Great Bl.-backed Gull	155	Common Grackle.....	1
Rock Dove.....	381	Purple Finch.....	10
Mourning Dove.....	31	White-winged Crossbill	1
Great Horned Owl.....		1 Pine Siskin.....	20
Barred Owl.....		3 American Goldfinch....	274
Northern Saw-whet Owl.	1 CW	Evening Grosbeak.....	719
Downy Woodpecker.....		9 House Sparrow.....	282
Hairy Woodpecker.....		6	

NUMBER OF SPECIES..... 56 (+ 3 - CW)

CW - Count Week: the 3 days before and the 3 days after the Count Day



## Brier Island Christmas Bird Count

by Richard Stern  
Kentville, N.S.

The 1990 Brier Island Christmas Bird Count took place on December 18, a week before Christmas, typically, for all the Nova Scotia counts this year, on a warm wet day. There were ten participants, nine from "away" and the tenth, Carl Haycock, spent the day on his lobster boat within the count circle combining, in a unique way, a day's work and a day's bird-counting. Apart from Carl, there were two parties; one covered the northern half of the Island and the other the southern half.

In total contrast to last year's bone-chilling experience, the weather was balmy with no snow but, by mid-afternoon, the wind had risen and we had to contend with heavy driving rain that made visibility poor and the participants very uncomfortable. The Village of Westport was notable for its empty feeders and lack of birds but a Northern Mockingbird was seen. We fared better on the coastline where we found average numbers of Common Loons, Red-necked Grebes, Common Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Oldsquaw, etc. Added bonuses were Purple Sandpipers and five Ruddy Turnstones in the Pond Cove area. One party flushed two separate Short-eared Owls. Eric Mills found a Northern Shrike and a Brown Thrasher along the coast near Peajack Cove. There were plenty of Kittiwakes, both well offshore and fishing in Westport Harbour.

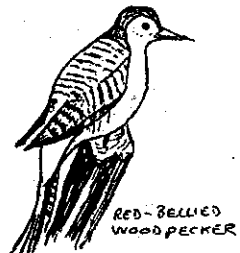
Perhaps the best birds of the day were seen offshore by Carl Haycock. His sightings included 300 Northern Fulmar, 204 Dovekie, 35 Razorbills and 200 Atlantic Puffins. This is the first year for some time that we have had a boat positioned well offshore, able to take part in the count, and it obviously paid off.

By late afternoon those left on the Island were pretty soaked but pleased with a good day's birding. The final tally was 59 species and 3,364 individuals.

### ----- NATURE REPORTS -----

#### Red-bellied Woodpecker in Truro

C. Allan Eddy, a BNS member in Truro, has let us know that he saw a female red-bellied woodpecker in a mature Manitoba maple at the end of his driveway. The bird was seen on Christmas Day at 11:00 a.m. and again on Boxing Day in the same tree. As of December 30, it had not been seen again. There were gale force southwest winds on Christmas Eve which probably brought the bird to Nova Scotia. Mr. Eddy is familiar with the species, having photographed them in



Florida. The sighting has been reported to the Nova Scotia Bird Society and has been included in the Truro and District Christmas Bird Count.

Two other sightings of red-bellied woodpeckers were reported recently; one in Apple River in mid-November and one was seen during the Yarmouth Christmas Bird Count. Robie Tufts, in Birds of Nova Scotia (1986), reported only nine previous records of this species in the province.

P.S. Just as we were going to press, Allan notified us that on January 6, 1991, the woodpecker returned and is now eating black sunflower seeds out of his feeder just outside his kitchen window. Allan has photographed it and the bird has been positively identified by three other people (Ross and Elsie Baker and Marie Eddy). The Nova Scotia Bird Society has been notified of the latest sighting.

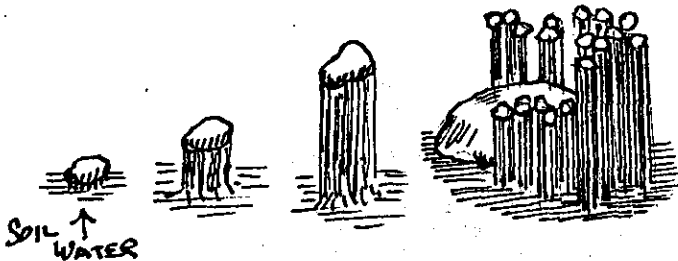
Allan lives at 391 Robie Street, Truro.

### Ice Structures in Frozen Soil

by Larry Bogan  
Cambridge Station, N.S.

You may have seen ice structures in the soils as you walked in the woods on cold autumn days. I noticed them most recently on Christmas Day when they were especially abundant. The previous three days had been warm and rainy but Christmas was cold and sunny.

Have you looked closely at these ice structures? They are usually closely packed narrow ice pillars that appear to have grown like grass from the soil under small stones or clumps of soil and lifted them upward many centimetres. Large stones do not appear to encourage the growth of these ice crystals and remain sunken among the mass of elevated small stones and soil.



How are these delicate structures of ice formed and under what conditions?

From my observations, the following facts seem apparent:

1. The ice is not simply the result of the expansion of the water during the freezing process. The length to diameter ratio of the ice pillars is quite large, on the order of 100:1.

2. There are tubulars among the ice pillars that appear to be drainage tubes for water.

3. The ice columns only form under small pieces of dirt or small stones.

My guess is that the water in the ground freezes directly under the small stone and adheres to the stone which is raised by the expansion associated with ice formation. Capillary action attracts water to the ice where the water freezes and expands further. This process continues and ultimately a pillar is formed.

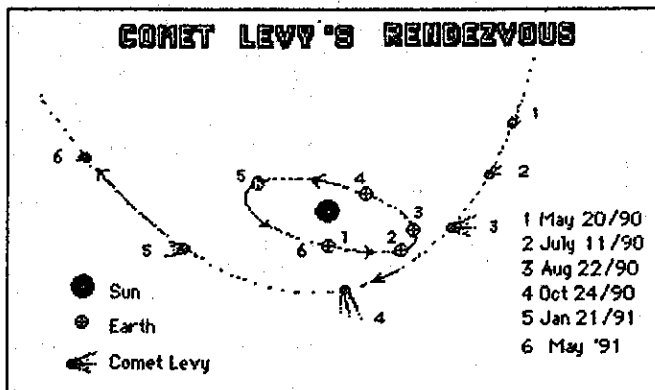
The accompanying diagram illustrates the process better than I can explain it.

According to the Encyclopedia of Geomorphology, "Cryopedology" is the study of needle ice or "pipkrake" (a Swedish word). These structures when "pore" water freezes and expands but water rises from unfrozen levels by capillary action. The effect is to raise little towers or pyramids crowned by chips of rock, leaves, etc. usually 2 to 10 high.

### Comet Levy's Rendezvous

by Sherman Williams  
Avonport, N.S.

On May 20 while hunting in the star fields of Pegasus and Andromeda, David Levy swept up his sixth comet, catalogued 1990c (the third comet to be found in 1990). Some BNS members know David personally from his student days at Acadia in the early 1970's. He presently lives in Tucson, Arizona, where he pursues his interests in astronomy including his passion for comet hunting. His success rate in comet discoveries is giving him legendary status among comet hunters.



Since 1965 I have been an active follower of several comets that have crossed our sky, and it was with particular interest that I took note of David's newest comet. I first

learned of his discovery on May 23, through a computer network. After obtaining information about the comet's orbit, I studied its predicted stellar journey on my computer star map. Its track would give it a prime location in the summer sky for viewers in the northern hemisphere.

Comet Levy is one of many celestial icebergs that roam the distant outer fringes of the solar system. Long ago, some disturbance set it on its great, elongated orbit that sent it hurtling inward through the solar system toward the Sun. Typical of most comets that come this way, the closer Comet Levy came to the Sun the more solar radiation was able to heat up its icy mass, producing vapours that glow and reflect sunlight. At discovery the comet was 450 million kilometres from Earth. At this distance it was still so faint (10th magnitude) that observers using small telescopes and binoculars had difficulty seeing it.

As the comet neared the Sun it continued to vaporize producing a fuzzy bright cloud or coma around the central mass. It was not until July 11 that its fuzzy coma was bright enough to make it a suitable target for the telescope. By then it was 230 million kilometres from Earth and had brightened to about magnitude 8.5 (the smaller the number, the brighter the comet). During this time I had my first view of Comet Levy; even through Roy Bishop's 200 mm telescope the comet was quite faint.

By July 21, at a distance of 186 million kilometres, Comet Levy was 7th magnitude, now bright enough to spot using only a pair of 7 x 35 binoculars (provided one knew just where in the sky to look). By early August it had brightened to about magnitude 5.5 which made it easy to spot using binoculars and the experienced observer was able to see it with the unaided eye. Its distance from us had decreased to 135 million kilometres, nearer than the Sun (150 million kilometres).

The comet continued to brighten as it drew ever closer to Earth and Sun; from the side opposite the Sun it began to develop a small tail as the particles boiling from it responded to the push of the Sun's radiation (the solar wind). In mid-August, with no moonlight to interfere, Comet Levy was offering its best views to date. At a distance of 83 million kilometres, and being placed well above the horizon before midnight, the comet could be easily spotted with the naked eye at magnitude 4.2. In the telescope it was showing a broad, fuzzy coma with a bright centre and a very short, fan-shaped tail.

On August 22 Comet Levy would rush by Earth at a distance of 67 million kilometres, the closest it would come to us on its inward journey to rendezvous with the Sun. Fortunately, at that time it was well placed in our night sky which made it an interesting object to observe. My August 22 journal reads:

"Beautiful clear night sky, some aurora present in the sky over Blomidon. Comet Levy is a neat sight, high in the southwest, its elongated form is easily seen naked-eye, estimated magnitude 3.8 to 3.9, near the bright star group, Delphinus, the dolphin. Even in binoculars, comet motion is noticeable after 15 minutes. Broad fan (60 deg arc) tail, slightly less than 1 deg long. The

coma is at least 0.5 deg in diameter with a bright, almost star-like centre, moved nearly 4 deg in the last 24 h (see illustration). Congratulations David!

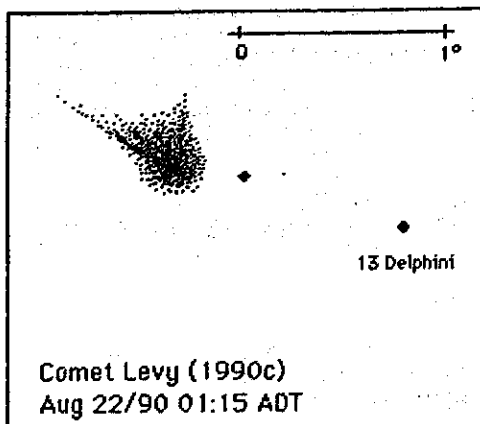
The word "rushing" applied to the motion of the comet going by Earth may seem a great exaggeration to the casual observer. In fact one would not notice any apparent motion from one moment to the next, certainly not any motion that would compare with seeing a meteor streak across the sky or a satellite quickly drift overhead. However, on the nights of August 22 and 23, Comet Levy would have been moving at a speed in the order of 50 kilometres per second, approximately the same speed as some meteors. Since the meteor is just a few tens of kilometres above our heads, burning up from friction within our atmosphere, it appears to streak across the sky in an instant. The comet, by comparison, is millions of kilometres distant and motion is noticeable only if the observer carefully relates the comet's position to a nearby background pattern of stars and makes another observation after some time has passed (e.g. 24 h later). In a large telescope, under higher magnification, and with a convenient pattern of background stars, one can notice minute to minute motion of the comet. The experience is much like noticing the movement of the minute or hour hand on a clock.

With each passing day, thought the last week in August, the accelerating speed of Comet Levy toward the Sun and the geometry of its position in space took it directly away from us (see illustration). This change quickly headed the comet toward the horizon. This

always means that viewing conditions will deteriorate even though the comet itself will continue to develop in brightness and structure as it approaches the Sun. By the time the sky darkens, the comet is near the treetops and eventually is lost in the haze and sky brightness near the Sun. After September 1, in spite of a full moon on September 4, I was able to make four more observations of Comet Levy before it was too near the horizon for viewing.

My final observation of Comet Levy was made September 9. My journal states:

"Clear with a few thin clouds near the horizon. 26th observation of Comet Levy, location RA 17h 11min Dec -30 deg 10', estimated magnitude 5.1, tail still fan shaped with a bit more structure seen in the upper part and extends across the field of the 32mm eyepiece, bright central nucleus. Star cluster, M62 less than 3 deg away from comet. Best view so far in my new 10 inch (254mm)



telescope. 9:45 pm: comet is getting close to the treetops."

Poor weather and the comet's progressive slide toward the horizon prevented me from making any further observations. By October 24, 1990, Comet Levy was at its turning point around the Sun (see illustration) and had started its long journey back to its place of origin. Since December the comet has been observed from the southern hemisphere. As 1991 began, Comet Levy was at a distance of over 200 million kilometres and its position will bring it above our horizon for a brief period each day. Until mid-February, Earth and the comet are actually getting closer to each other; however, because it is receding from the Sun and because it remains very near the southern horizon, its reappearance is not favourable for observation. In spite of these drawbacks, one clear morning soon I will be up and out before dawn hoping to make observation number 27. As May approaches it is expected that Comet Levy will be lost to most observers. At that time it will be over 500 million kilometres from Earth.

By the way, in November David was the co-discoverer of yet another comet, his seventh (1990). To conclude, here is an electronic message that was posted on the computer network bulletin board:

05-Jan-91 15:44:03 EST Sb: New Comets

To: David Levy 70721,1706

Fm: Tony Ward/ONT 71520,1537

"David: What a truly amazing fellow you are!.....Comet Levy gave me many hours of pleasure last summer, and it was a great moment when I realized that its orbit would bring it back within easy northern binocular range this spring once more. Somehow around here when something "goes South" we we don't think it will come back again. All the best for the new year....

---Tony"

#### Weather Statistics - The End of 1990

by Larry Bogan  
Cambridge Station, N.S.

On the next page are the weather statistics for the last three months of 1990. Let's see if there is anything unusual.

October was warm and wet with less sunshine than we would have liked. Rainfall was slightly more than the 30-year average and the temperature was a whopping 2.7 degrees C (that's 4.9 deg F) above the 30-year average. We got lots of low pressure areas coming up the Atlantic Coast bringing warm air laden with moisture.

November weather statistics were very close to the 30-year averages and everyone is grateful that it was nothing like the November we had last year. (I have included the statistics for November and December 1989 just to remind you

of those cold snowy months.)

In December 1990, we have had almost no snow and very warm temperatures. December beat out October and was a full 3 degrees C above expectations. A more dramatic comparison is with 1989 - on an average December 1990 was 9.2 C warmer than last years December. That translates into our requiring only 64 % as much fuel to heat our homes this year compared with last.

As a result of 1990's warm end-of-the-year there was essentially no snow. We had only 7 % of the expected snowfall for the period and 4 % of the amount we received in 1989. A rainfall 146 % of the normal for 30 years made up for the lack of snow.

Weather Statistics  
Kentville Agricultural Station  
(30-year averages in parentheses)

	Mean Temp deg C	Rainfall (mm)	Snow (cm)	Heating Deg-days	Bright Sunshine Hours
Oct 90	11.8 (9.1)	127 (99)	0 (3)	200 (278)	113 (131)
Nov 90	4.4 (4.0)	118 (106)	2 (12)	410 (422)	72 (81)
Nov 89	3.5	128	52	438	66
Dec 90	0.6 (-2.4)	161 (73)	3 (57)	524 (631)	65 (56)
Dec 89	-8.6	23	68	825	77
Total 90	5.6 (3.6)	406 (279)	5 (72)	1134(1331)	250 (268)
Nov-Dec 89			120		

Workshop  
The Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora: Toward a  
North American Conservation Strategy

by Nick Hill  
Kentville, N.S.

This workshop was held at Mount Saint Vincent University on September 13 and 14, 1990, to bring together North American experts on the biology of the endangered Atlantic Coastal Plain flora with representatives from conservation bodies and local governments. The mandate was to draw up research and conservation priorities in order to better protect and manage the remaining Coastal Plain habitats of North America.

Botanists and conservationists from all the main coastal plain regions of North America gave "status reports" on their coastal plain communities. From the deep south, Bob Kral spoke of "Doleens", strange karst, subsidence ponds with amazing diversities of genera barely known in Nova Scotia (e.g. meadow beauty (*Rhexia*) and yellow-eyed grasses (*Xyris*)) and of southern coastal plain genera unknown to the Nova Scotia botanist. He warned of the "Range Manager",

fertilizing doleens to increase catfish production with little concern for coastal plain vegetation. As in the doleens, most coastal plain communities undergo sharp fluctuations in water level. This is also true for disjunct communities in ponds and marshes of Michigan (v.v. Tony Reznicek and Mike Penskar), for lakeshores in Nova Scotia (v.v. Wisheu, Keddy and Hill), for Long Island ponds (v.v. Zarembo and Davison), New England ponds (v.v. Sorrie) and Carolina Bays (v.v. Sutter). In Nova Scotia the number of rare coastal plain species is strongly correlated with watershed area of lakes, which in itself is correlated with waterlevel fluctuation (Hill and Keddy). Richard Enser, however, reported the opposite problem in Rhode Island ponds; here, the waterlevel of coastal plain ponds flanked by Atlantic White Cedar is maintained by streams or seepage, and it appears that one must protect the water sources in order to preserve the coastal plain communities.

Ernie (ne Alfred) Schuyler called coastal plain species "weeds" and maintained that all-terrain vehicles and fire increases diversity of coastal plain communities of New Jersey Pine Barrens; all one needed was a pack of matches, a jug of gasoline and a willing after hours patron of a local watering hole. Fire is a potent management tool. Rob Sutter has studies underway on the preservation of species diversity in Longleaf Pine savannas of Georgia using fire and Bob Zarembo is looking for fire ecologists to help the Nature Conservancy manage Pine Barren communities on Long Island.

There is a large diversity of "coastal plain" habitat, or rather plant communities containing coastal plain plant species. While this separation seems picky, it was a major bone to chew at the workshop. According to Emily Russell, the purists hold that a coastal plain community must occur on unglaciated sediment of the coastal plain; thus Cape Cod intermittent ponds are not coastal plain communities and Nova Scotian lakeshores and bogs are certainly not. The fact remains that non coastal plain communities contain coastal plain species, many of which are globally endangered. After heated semantic debate, we moved to list all such communities and to draw up an inventory of how much coastal plain habitat (sensu lato) each region had, how much had been lost and how much was endangered. This is a good start and, though not the conservation initiative we had sought, it gets conservationists to see their region in a global context with the accompanying support and responsibility. In future, I hope we can contribute a fourth category - restored coastal plain communities. We have several such communities in Nova Scotia where coastal plain species, including endangered members, have returned to lakeshores after the natural hydrological regime returned when dams were abandoned.

Coastal plain communities along the eastern seaboard of the U.S. are fiercely contested. Emily Russell presented a case study of a land-use resolution for the New Jersey Pine Barrens which, as she puts it, "lie in the midst of the Boston to Washington megalopolis". Sarah Davison explained the Nature Conservancy's role in helping raise \$14.5 million to protect 2000 acres of coastal plain pond habitat on eastern Long Island. In contrast, here in Nova Scotia, we



are still finding botanically unexplored bogs and lakes containing rare coastal plain species and, believe it or not, new coastal plain species for the province (e.g. Ruth Newell's Juncus caesariense). We have just begun to put reserves aside specifically to preserve coastal plain plants and now have several mechanisms to do so: e.g. through the N.S. Museum's Special Places programme and the recently announced Systems Planning Department of the Department of Lands and Forests. Another initiative underway is the idea of creating a Biosphere Reserve, taking in a to-be-specified area of Kejimikujik National Park and the Tobeatic Wildlife Area. Neil Munroe spoke about how a Biosphere Reserve might affect the National Park and John Leduc took us on a panoramic slide show of the Tobeatic. Judging from the reaction of our American colleagues, there may be a 1990's version of Fernand's expedition, this time to find lost coastal plain communities of the Tobeatic. George Francis explained the logistics of Biosphere Reserves and presented model cases. George, Neil, and I are organizing a follow-up working session to look into the possibility of a Biosphere Reserve for Nova Scotia.

#### A Robie Tufts Method

by Bernard Forsythe  
Wolfville, N.S.

On the morning of July 15, 1990, I was exploring one of my favourite haunts, the southern end of Black River Lake. As I slowly advanced through the scattered black spruces, my eyes were directed downward. With a stick, I pushed aside Labrador tea, leatherleaf and pale laurel to get a clear view of the rich green carpet of thick sphagnum moss and three-leaved false solomon's seal below. There just might be some of my beloved orchids in this fascinating setting.

Obviously my ears were not needed for an orchid hunt; they were busy monitoring bird sounds. Recently-fledged young birds were busy begging food from scolding parents while several males were still declaring their territoriality by singing. The raspy scold note of an anxious common yellowthroat just ahead was easy to pick out. Palm warbler sounds came from all sides. Near the open water a swamp sparrow was singing. From the opposite side of the open area of the bog came the varied squawks and squeaks of a foraging family of rusty blackbirds trying to one-up a nearby gray jay family. For me, the most sought after midsummer song from our forests came from the top spire of a black spruce - the loud, clear whistle "quick three beers" of a male olive-sided flycatcher.



When I began recording bird nests I would often visit Robie Tufts and we would trade stories of our finds. He often spoke fondly of the olive-sided flycatcher. Because of failing health, he had not seen one for some time so I felt honoured to be able to direct him and his wife, Lillian, to

a nest site where he once more saw this woodland flycatcher. Any olive-sided nests that I found were located by following the adults to the nests or flushing an adult as I climbed a tree. Robie once told me if you are in a nest territory, look for a thinly limbed conifer tree with open space around it. The olive-sided nest will be on the end of an exposed branch, usually about half way up the tree.

As I continued with my orchid search the "quick three beers" stopped. Now I was hearing a scolding "pip-pip-pip" from two olive-sided flycatchers. There was a nest nearby. This would be a great time to test Robie's nest finding theory. Raising my eyes I looked around. Oh-oh, all the trees around me were spindly black spruce. I looked over several carefully. In front of me was a bit of an opening. On the other side stood a thin black spruce with most of its branches dead. About 20 feet up the trunk was a small live branch one foot long. What was that shiny twig sticking up from the green sprigs? Could it be the bill of a bird? Up came the binoculars. I could hardly believe my eyes. The branch was exposed and barely large enough to hold a nest. On top, huddled together were three well feathered young olive-sided flycatchers. They would be leaving the nest in a day or so. It had worked, at least this time!

For those of us fortunate enough to have known Robie his interest and knowledge of birds will influence us for the rest of our lives. More recent birders will have to be content with our accounts and the various books and articles written by this remarkable man.

### The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avoider \*

by Ogden Nash

Bird watchers top my honors list.  
I aimed to be one, but I missed.  
Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,  
My aim turned out to be erratic,  
And I, bespectacled and binocular,  
Exposed myself to comment jocular.

We don't need too much birdlore, do we,  
To tell a flamingo from a towhee;  
Yet I cannot, and never will,  
Unless the silly birds stand still.  
And there's no enlightenment so obscure  
As ornithological literature.

Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,  
Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?  
You rush to consult your Nature guide  
And inspect the gallery inside,  
But a bird in the open never looks  
Like its picture in the birdie books -

Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage  
And plunges you back into ignorant gloomage.  
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,



Watching the clock instead of finches,  
But I sometimes visualize in my gin  
The Audubon that I audubin.

\* Sherman Bleakney's sister-in-law sent this poem to him with Christmas greetings some years ago. Nancy Bleakney just rediscovered it and thought BNS Newsletter readers would enjoy it too.

-----  
TRIVIAL TIDBITS  
-----

of Local Natural History

June 1, 1990 to November 30, 1990 (birds)

September 1, 1990 to November 30, 1990 (other categories)

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

Skies

On Sep 3, at Avonport, Sherman Williams observed moon-dogs on each side of the moon.

Fungi

On Oct 1, I noted lots of honey mushrooms along the Acadia University Nature Trail. I also found an ash-tree bolete (Oct 1) and a smooth lepiota (Oct 9), both in Wolfville (identifications by DG).

Plants

I noted lots of Canada holly berries south of Halifax on Nov 13. In Wolfville, on Dec 2, a garden still had a blooming English violet, and a blooming dandelion was seen at Acadia University (WH).

Marine Invertebrates

On Sep 18, at Black Rock (Canada Creek), many hundreds of Onchidorus sea slugs were densely packed on exposed surfaces of lower intertidal rocks - also lots of Asterias starfish (JW).

On Oct 16, at Gulliver's Cove on Digby Neck, there were lots of stranded and trapped purple jellyfish along the shore. These jellyfish are from the southern Eastern Seaboard. Another find from the south was many clumps of sargassum-weed (a brown tropical seaweed) (JW).

Insects

On Sep 4, on the highway at Greenwich, I rescued a brown woollybear caterpillar of a garden tiger moth; (in captivity) it pupated two days later. Found at Kingston on a rock wall were actively moving cases of "plaster bagworms", or

another close relative of the clothes moths (GS, JW).

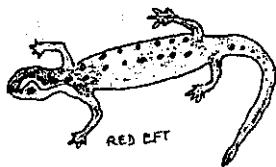
In mid-September, near Hantsport, Janet Pope got help from Dick Rogers in identifying the continuous ringing sounds on summer and fall nights - they come from katydids or long-horned grasshoppers.

A pair of mating bumblebees were seen on the Acadia campus Sep 19 (PD, JW). A mourning cloak butterfly was flying there Oct 16.

On the evening of Nov 15, Jean Timpa noted that winter moths were common and crickets were chirping in Wolfville. I noted presumed winter moths flying in Wolfville Nov 24 and Dec 2. On Dec 2 at Greenwich, an adult caddisfly was flying (JW).

### Amphibians

On about Sep 8 a red eft (terrestrial stage of a newt) was found under a porch in Wolfville (JT, JTi). Two subadult American toads were rescued from entrapment in a Wolfville fountain Sep 11 (LP, JW). I saw a large adult leopard frog on the main dyke at Grand Pre Sep 24.



A yellow-spotted salamander was found in Wolfville Oct 20 and then shown at a BNS meeting Oct 22 (MH, JSB).

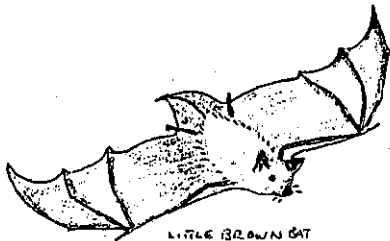
On Nov 29, which was extremely balmy (18 deg C), a spring peeper was heard calling in West Brooklyn (GA).

### Reptiles

Two painted turtles were basking at Greenwich on Oct 6 (JW).

### Mammals

I saw a bat flying in Wolfville on Oct 15 and RS saw a large bat flying west at Huntington Beach on Oct 20 in mid-afternoon. A bat (probably a little brown bat) was caught inside Denton Hall at Acadia University by people working on the stage,



A muskrat was eating apples under a tree in Wolfville on Nov 7 (DT). On Nov 16 at Acadia U. a fairly tame, smallish, gray-coloured squirrel with nearly no hair on its tail was seen (TM). TM also reports seeing a red fox, and having a lawn messed up by a skunk, at Avonport on Sep 12.



A harbour seal was seen at Huston's Beach by the Woolavers on Aug 14. Perhaps the same seal was at Boot Island Sep 24 (JW) and then well upstream in the Cornwallis River at Coldbrook Dec 2 (RS).

A beluga whale was off Ingonish Beach from early September to early October and it was at least curious, if not

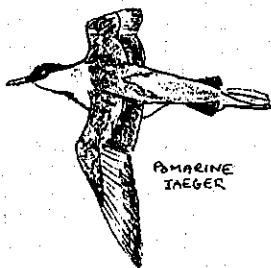
actually friendly, towards swimming humans (CBC,HCH).

On Nov 17, a freshly dead white-tailed deer was found on the rocks of Blue Beach below the bluff from which it must have fallen (fide TM).

Finally, four humans in various attires were playing tennis in Wolfville on Dec 21 (WH)

### Birds

Eleven red-throated loons were seen off Evangeline Beach on Oct 22 (JGT). Two pied-billed grebes were at New Minas on Aug 30 and 100+ red-necked grebes were off Tidnish Head (Cumberland Co.) on Sep 9 (JGT).



On Aug 25, off Brier Island there were lots of greater and sooty shearwaters, many red phalaropes and a puffin (MT,HFN). On a NSBS pelagic trip off Purcell's Cove on Sep 29, both great and South Polar skuas, two northern fulmars, single greater and Manx shearwaters and a pomarine jaeger were seen (JGT et al). A skua species was seen off Brier Island on Sep 30 (JG,MG).

An immature gannet was seen south of Halifax on Nov 13 (JW). A double-crested cormorant was still at Sheffield Mills on Oct 14 (JW). American bitterns were reported from West Advocate Harbour, near Hantsport, and New Minas up to Oct 10 (JGT et al). A great blue heron was killed hitting overhead wires at Blomidon Aug 14 and a second dead one was found near the roadside (AREW). The Tufts and NSBS saw 40+ great blues near Tidnish (Cumberland Co.) Sep 9 and others were reported up to Oct 31 at New Minas (JGT).

Immature black-crowned night herons were seen Aug 5 at West Advocate Harbour and Aug 31 at Cape Sable (JGT et al). A snowy egret was on Bon Portage Island Sep 2 (JGT et al).

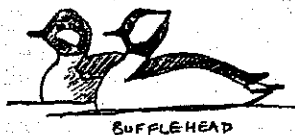
Reports of Canada geese began Sep 30 (DTo,MZ) and stopped on Oct 28 (JGT). Wood duck eggs in a nest-box in Tobeaatic Wildlife Management Area had hatched by June 23 (JW), three males in eclipse plumage were at Canard Poultry July 23 (BBT,JW), and a beautiful male was at Sheffield Mills Nov 2 (JGT).

Large numbers of green-winged teal were reported in late October and early November (RS,JGT). Norm Seymour of Antigonish, at a seminar at Acadia U., said that by the end of November, 85 percent of female black ducks have mates and copulations are seen fairly frequently.

Northern pintails were reported for Sep 16 to Nov 2, with New Minas having nine of them Sep 30 (NSBS,BNS). A northern shoveler was at New Minas Oct 10 (JGT). Eight American wigeons were still in Canning Nov 2 (JGT).

On June 28 and July 6, the Thextons saw about 100 common eiders flying low over Wolfville and Port Williams, heading southwest. Large numbers of common eiders were seen in August at Economy and Brier Island and off Evangeline Beach in Sep and Oct (JGT,JW).

The Sterns saw a harlequin duck off Brier Island Nov 12. Judy Tufts had an unusual sighting of a normally oceanic oldsquaw at Canard Poultry Nov 2. White-winged scoters were seen at Evangeline Beach Sep 17 and Oct 22 (200 on latter date) (BBT,JGT). A single surf scoter was at Economy Aug 3 (JGT).



BUFFLEHEAD

Buffleheads were seen Oct 21 and Nov 2 at Canard and Sheffield Mills respectively (JGT). There were 21 common mergansers at White Rock on Oct 18 (JGT), and an approaching bald eagle flushed 18 there on Oct 28 (RS). Two hooded mergansers were in north Kentville on Oct 31 and 18+ at Annapolis Royal on Nov 6 (RS).

The Yoells saw an osprey nearly daily to early September at Lumsden Reservoir. Bald eagles were reported in July near White Rock; in August at South Maitland, Lower Bass River, Brier Island and Mount Denson; in September at Hortonville; in October at Cheverie and Greenwich; and in November near Maitland and Tennessee (KLC,JPzo,JGT,JW). Then on Nov 17 a tree at Gaspereau held nine bald eagles (EG).

Northern harriers were reported at Grand Pre from late July to Nov 7; other sightings were at Berwick, Middleton, Brier Island, and Sheffield Mills (JGT,JT,JW). Reports of sharp-shinned hawks spanned Aug 26 to early December with 50+ on Seal Island Oct 6-8 (JGT). Perhaps the most interesting observation was of one being mobbed by an orange-crowned warbler in Wolfville on Dec 2 (JSB).

A single immature Cooper's hawk was reported from Bon Portage Island on Sep 2 and two more immatures at Sable River on Oct 5 (JGT et al). The Tufts saw three broad-winged hawks over Digby Neck on Aug 25.

Jake MacDonald reported this incident involving three red-tailed hawks on Sep 2 at Grand Pre: two hawks were together and one dropped a chicken into rose bushes; a third hawk, with one leg bent inward and useless, arrived and managed to find and carry off the carcass. On Nov 10, Judy Tufts saw seven red-tails from Berwick to Middleton.

The earliest report of a rough-legged hawk at Grand Pre was Oct 28 (JGT). Two American kestrels were present in Wolfville in mid-June; one was vocal (perhaps they were nesting) (JM); also five kestrels (perhaps a family) were together at Grand Pre on Aug 8 (JGT).

At University Hall in Wolfville at dusk on June 5, a falcon (probably a merlin) was chased by 10-12 chimney swifts. On Aug 5 at Economy, an adult merlin tried to feed an immature but was rejected (JGT). At Lumsden Reservoir on Sep 5, Barry Yoell saw a merlin twice chase a pileated woodpecker. On Aug 17 at Evangeline Beach, Judy Tufts saw a merlin knock a "peep" into the water, but it managed to evade the predator and then swim safely to shore. More than five merlins were observed on Seal Island during Oct 6-8 (JGT).

Peregrine falcons were reported at White Rock on July 22 (RRN); chasing shorebirds at Grand Pre on Aug 2; at Hartlen's Point on Sep 7; five to seven birds at Seal Island Oct 6-8 (JGT); two at Evangeline Beach on Oct 10; and one chasing teal at Canard Poultry on Oct 15 (RS). A gyrfalcon was on Bon Portage Island Sep 30 (GD,PCS) but I heard no later reports of any gyr's.

Rumour has it that a few gray partridge were near Crowell Tower, Acadia U. in September (GW), and Gordon Tufts saw eight "hun's" near Kentville on Nov 2. On June 13-14 in east Wolfville, a male bobwhite quail was crowing; the bird had one crippled leg (JGT,MP).

A single American coot was at the New Minas riverside pond on June 24 (JW). Three juvenile coots (a brood? from?) were there from Oct 11-14 and one until Nov 2 (JGT). One coot was at Annapolis Royal on Nov 6 (RS).

Hundreds (up to 400) of black-bellied plovers were noted at Grand Pre through all of August; one on Aug 20 had a "pink-painted rear" (JGT). Only small numbers (up to 25) of black-bellies were seen there in September and October. One lesser golden plover was seen on Brier Island on Aug 26 (JGT) and then up to 50 at Grand Pre from Sep 7 to Sep 30 (BBT,JGT,JW).

Judy Tufts first noted semipalmated plovers at Grand Pre on July 18, then a peak of 400 in only one small area on Aug 21, and small numbers up to Oct 28. Again this year, killdeer with youngsters were seen in July on the roof of the Wolfville school (JSBo); also a nest with four eggs was found at Sunken Lake on July 14 (JM). A killdeer was flying and calling repeatedly at midnight in Wolfville on Sep 6 (JW). Thirty to forty killdeer were at the Melanson river bridge Sep 27-29 (JGT).

Both lesser and greater yellowlegs were in Canning on July 28 (JGT). Lessers were reported from July 8 to Sep 29, greaters from July 28 to Oct 14. Eighty greaters were at Canning's Harris' Pond on Oct 3 (JGT). Up to three solitary sandpipers were at Canard Poultry in late July, late August and late September; and two more were in Canning on Sep 17 (JGT,BBT,JW).

Spotted sandpipers were seen locally from July 20 to Sep 29 (JGT). There were 15 willets in Wolfville Harbour on July 19 and 17 were seen on Brier Island on Aug 25 (JGT). Whimbrels were reported only in August at Grand Pre with at least ten on Aug 25 (JGT,BBT).

Up to four Hudsonian godwits were found at Grand Pre in August, six at Cape Sable on Aug 31, three on Bon Portage Island on Sep 2, and one at Canning on Oct 3 (JGT). Forty-two ruddy turnstones were near Economy on Aug 4 (JGT,NSBS) and 57 on Brier Island Aug 25 (JGT); other reports were of up to seven at Grand Pre in August and to Sep 9 (JGT,JW). Small numbers of red knots were seen in August and early September from Grand Pre to Cape Sable (JGT) and several were still at Gand Pre on Nov 2 (BLF).

The only reports of sanderlings were of four at Cape Sable on Aug 31 (JGT) and 12+ at Grand Pre on Sep 9 (JW). Semipalmated sandpipers, our major kind of "peep", were most abundant (tens of thousands) at Evangeline Beach in late July (BB); 150 were at Canard Poultry on July 20 (JGT); and,

on Aug 11 at Grand Pre, Judy Tufts saw one "semi" with its rear end painted yellow - Kim Mawhinney found that this bird had been banded in late May (spring migration) in Saskatchewan by Cheri Gratto, a former Acadia student!

Least sandpipers were reported only for late July and Sep 9 - 50 were at Canard Poultry on July 20 (JGT). Small numbers of white-rumped sandpipers were seen from Aug 4 (JW) to Sep 10 (JGT). A Baird's sandpiper was on Brier Island Aug 25 (JGT). Pectoral sandpipers were at several local ponds Sep 2 to Oct 3; Judy Tufts reports that our former fall hot-spot for pectoral sandpipers, the Ells farm at Sheffield Mills, has changed its layout a bit and is no longer a hot-spot.

Single dunlins were seen at Grand Pre from Sep 9 (JW) and 50 were there Nov 21 (RS). A stilt sandpiper in breeding plumage was at Canard Poultry in late July (JGT,BBT,JW). Up to 62 short-billed dowitchers were at Wolfville, Grand Pre and Canning from late July to early August; others were seen at Cape Sable, Brier Island and New Minas, up to Sep 28 (JGT).

Common snipe were seen to Oct 12 (JGT).

The only reports of phalaropes were of red phalaropes on Aug 25 off Brier Island (MT,HFN) and on Sep 29 off Purcell's Cove (JGT,NSBS).

Two Bonaparte's gulls were at Brier Island on Aug 26 and one at Canard Poultry during Sep 14-17 (JGT). Small numbers of up to ten ring-billed gulls were seen throughout September at Grand Pre, Canning, and the Zeller's Mall in New Minas (JW).

Jim Foster saw unidentified gulls hawking aerial insects near Blomidon in mid-September. A Caspian tern was at Grand Pre on Aug 20 (JGT).

Black guillemots were seen in August near Advocate and at Brier Island (JGT). Four Atlantic puffins were seen off Brier Island on Aug 27 (JGT).

There was an "outbreak" of inland dovebies on about Nov 27 and Dec 5; one on a lawn at The Lookoff, two in Wolfville (one alive), and one (alive) at New Minas. These occurrences were correlated with periods of very strong winds. (Reports from CKC,HF,DH,EP and ?T(sic).)

Single black-billed cuckoos were near Economy (singing) on Aug 4 (JGT,MT) and on Seal Island on Oct 6 (JGT).

A great horned owl was on Bon Portage Island on Sep 1 (JGT), two were seen at Cheverie in October (KLC) and two more in Kentville on Nov 22 (RS). Bernard Forsythe found 15 short-eared owls at northwest Grand Pre on Dec 1 and some were still there on Dec 3 (CB,BBT).

Strangely, this fall there were no northern saw-whet owls caught in mist nets on Bon Portage Island (CKC,ABD); but CKC reported a road-killed saw-whet at Gaspereau on Nov 8.

Common nighthawks were seen in Wolfville from June 25 to July 3 (JM); could it be possible that Wolfville's roof-nesting killdeers might be somehow related to the ten-year absence of nighthawks here (JW)? Nighthawks (6 + 3) (possibly migrating) were seen at Brier Island on August 25-26 (JGT).



After the bad weather in late May, almost all of Wolfville's chimney swifts roosted at University Hall (where there is a much longer history of roosting going back to the 1940's). The numbers there (mostly 100-200) were far below what we usually see, especially in late July and early August. I think this was a terrible year for swifts in all of the northern part of the swifts' range; it may take a year or two for the numbers of northern migrants to recover.

Possible aerial mating of Wolfville swifts was seen on June 8 and June 24 (JM, JW). On June 25 a swift attacked a flying bat and hit it hard three times (JM). A swift was believed to be hunting for twigs in Wolfville in July 16 (JM). A probable nest-site in a chimney was reported from Kentville on July 26 (MM). An impressive funnel of 500-700 swifts went into the Annapolis Legion Social hall chimney on June 23 (JDA). Swifts were last seen on Sep 3 at Bon Portage Island and on Sep 4 in Wolfville (JGT, JW).

A beautiful male rufous hummingbird was at Lockeport on Aug 7 (JGT). A family of ruby-throated hummingbirds was seen on the Wolfville Ridge in late August until Aug 31; a late one appeared there Sep 18 (JGT). Norm Seymour saw an unidentified hummingbird at Antigonish on Nov 7.

The Tufts saw three red-headed woodpeckers on Seal Island on Oct 6-7 and, on Dec 8, an immature appeared at a Falmouth feeder (JMc). In mid-November a red-bellied woodpecker was reported near Apple River (RBA).

The only reported observation of a yellow-bellied sapsucker was of one foraging on the ground at Sherbrooke Lake on June 20 (JW). A downy woodpecker was feeding a juvenile in Wolfville at the end of June (BBT), and one was "whinnying" at Greenwich Oct 20 (JW, BNS). Both downy and hairy woodpeckers were at feeders at Wolfville, Wolfville Ridge, Avonport and Kentville.

The Tufts reported a mass migration of northern flickers Oct 6-8 on Seal Island. Late fall flickers were noted in early November at Wolfville (JGT, JW) and early December at Avonport (EU). I have reports of pileated woodpeckers from early September to early November, from Wolfville (JGT) and Lumsden Reservoir (BBY).

Olive-sided flycatchers were noted in June at Poplar Grove and south of Annapolis Royal (JW). Of two eastern wood-pewees singing on July 1 on Wolfville Ridge, one was perhaps a yearling and was very "hoarse, squeaky and hesitant"; four (probably a family) were seen there Aug 10 and they departed by very early September (JGT).

Two yellow-bellied flycatchers were on Bon Portage Island on Sep 1 (JGT). The Tufts reported that alder flycatchers were very plentiful this summer in the Annapolis Valley, Dartmouth, etc; in one Breeding Bird Survey, this species was heard on 29 of 50 stops (JGT). The Tufts also reported lots of families of eastern kingbirds through the Annapolis Valley and at Grand Pre in August.



The only report of horned larks was of six at Grand Pre on Nov 7 (JGT).

The Thextons visited the purple martin colony (eight communal houses) at Oxford on June 5 when about 30 martins were flying around. A Lands and Forests employee reported that during the cold spell in late May, the martins were weakened (one or more were found dead). Also a raven was observed pulling five of the weak martins out from their nest-cavities; probably several more were killed as 15 piles of feathers were found beneath the houses.

One tree swallow was still at Seal Island on Oct 6 (JGT). On June 24, eight to ten cliff swallows were excitedly investigating the new Highway 101 bridge being built south of Annapolis; 75 active nests were on the Allains River bridge just west of Annapolis (JW). A single cliff swallow was seen near Grafton on June 29 (JW).

Lots of people are remarking that blue jays are abundant, especially at feeders, and eating us out of our seed budgets. A red-breasted nuthatch was at my Wolfville feeder on Nov 17. A white-breasted nuthatch was seen on Wolfville Ridge on Oct 27 (JGT - only their fourth sighting of these since 1982), and I've been seeing singles in Wolfville through November.

The Tufts had these sightings of brown creepers: singles on Wolfville Ridge on Aug 22 and Oct 21, and six to eight on Seal Island on Oct 6-8. One of the latter joined the boat back to Clark's Harbour (landed twice on Gordon's jacket). Also on Seal Island that weekend, a housewren, a winter wren and a marsh wren were seen (JGT).

Eastern bluebirds successfully nested at White Rock and Brier Island (JGT,BLF,RS). The young at White Rock fledged on July 26. A pair was seen on the North Mountain north of Bridgetown in early June (BH). On Oct 14 at St. Croix, nine bluebirds were seen together on a power line (BS).

Judy Tufts feels that thrushes were very uncommon this year, at least in Kings County. Swainson's thrushes were only reported for Oct 14 (JGT) and Nov 10 (RS); the latter bird was caught on Brier Island by RS's dog. On Nov 12 a wood thrush was seen in Halifax's Fairview Cemetery (a real hot-spot) (FL).

I have lots of records for northern mockingbirds. Singing birds were in Kentville in early June (SD), at Delhaven in mid-June (JG), and in Wolfville June 25-26 (mimicing a bobwhite(!) among others, for hours in extremely early a.m.) (BBT). In east Wolfville, a successful pair produced possibly two broods, one mocker was singing again Oct 20, and early winter sightings occurred on Nov 30 and Dec 8 (BBT). Other summer records include June 28 in Yarmouth (RRN), a nest with young at Steam Mill on June 30 (HF), two west of Canard Poultry (GF), and one at Dartmouth on July 27 (JGT). October sightings were at Seal Island, Dartmouth (JGT) and Cheverie (KLC,GR). Singles were at Middleton in early November (JDK), near The Lookoff on Nov 12 (GC) and in Wolfville on Nov 9 (CB) and Dec 8 (BBT).

Three brown thrashers were seen on Seal Island on Oct 7 (JGT). Cedar waxwings had fledged young early on July 17 at White Rock; a flock of 12 was seen on Wolfville Ridge on Aug 17 (JGT); they were common at Greenwich on Oct 20 (BNS); and

some were still in Wolfville in early December (GT).

On Oct 21-22 there were three to four northern shrikes seen at Avonport, Kingsport, etc. (JGT et al), and another shrike was at Melanson on Nov 7 (CKC). BBT estimated 15,000 European starlings at dusk near the Port Williams bridge and 2,000 at Greenwich (alders opposite Hennigar's Market) in mid-September.

Six solitary vireos were seen on Wolfville Ridge Aug 28-31 and one on Seal Island on Oct 7 (JGT). A warbling vireo was heard singing in Wolfville from June 7 to 19 (BLF, JGT, JW).

BBT reported a noticeable absence of fall warblers in Wolfville; JGT reported a migratory wave of several species from mid-August to early September on Wolfville Ridge. An orange-crowned warbler (a real challenge for identification) was in Wolfville on Dec 2; it was mobbing a sharp-shinned hawk (JSB)! RBA reported a cerulean warbler at Hartlen's Point on Sep 9. Groups of yellow-rumped warblers were at Wolfville on Oct 1 (JW) and Oct 21 (JGT).

Palm warblers were seen at Grand Pre on Sep 30 (NSBS) and Seal Island on Oct 7 (JGT). An American redstart was singing at 9:15 p.m. in Wolfville on June 14 (JW on "swift-duty"). An ovenbird nest with five eggs was found at West Brooklyn on June 16; the parent did the broken-wing act (BLF, BNS). A northern waterthrush was on Bon Portage Island on Sep 2 (JGT). Several mourning warblers were at Canada Creek in June-July and one was singing in Blomidon Park on July 20 (JGT).



The only scarlet tanager reported was seen on Seal Island on Oct 7 (JGT). Northern cardinals were reported from Bridgetown on Nov 3 (by ?) and Westport, Brier Island, where there were four on Nov 11 (RS); another cardinal was in Wolfville from Nov 26 to Dec 9 (MS et al). At Avonport on June 30, a female rose-breasted grosbeak was hulling sunflower seeds, then carrying them away (to young in a nest?) (EU).

A blue grosbeak was on Brier Island on Oct 8 (ES, FS). At least one indigo bunting was seen on Brier Island on Oct 6 (JGT). On Nov 8 at Liverpool, a dickcissel killed itself by hitting a window (HD, CC, JD).

The earliest report of American tree sparrows was on Nov 10 when two sang for me in Wolfville. A nest of chipping sparrows was in a grape-vine on a Wolfville house on July 17 (SVK); I saw a migrant "chippy" in a mixed flock of sparrows on Oct 14 at Sheffield Mills. Two clay-colored sparrows and a field sparrow were seen on Seal Island from Oct 6-8 (JGT).

Judy Tufts reported that singing sharp-tailed sparrows were abundant near Wolfville this summer; others noted were at Scots Bay, Seal Island and Hartlen's Point up to Oct 12 (JGT). The Tufts had a fox sparrow on Wolfville Ridge on Nov 11. Two swamp sparrows were seen in Canning on Sep 30 (NSBS, BNS) and one on Seal Island on Oct 7 (JGT).

A white-crowned sparrow was seen on Seal Island from Oct 6-8 (JGT) and another in Wolfville on Oct 17-18 (JSB). The

latter was with many dark-eyed juncos and white-throated sparrows. I saw flocks of white-throats on Oct 14 and Oct 20 at Sheffield Mills and Greenwich. Dark-eyed juncos were reported as abundant in many flocks in early November and "late fall" (JGT,RS). Snow buntings were first noted on Oct 21 at Grand Pre (RS); other flocks were seen in Bridgetown (400), Annapolis (150) (JGT) and Wolfville (200) (AR).

No bobolinks were reported after single birds were seen on Aug 26 and Aug 31 (JGT). A strange-looking male red-winged blackbird was at Avonport on Aug 1 - head gray, throat bright orange (EU). A beautiful male yellow-headed blackbird was on Brier Island Aug 26 (MT).

There were 60 common grackles at a Wolfville feeder on Aug 19 (BBT) and 500-600 in the Tufts' yard on Wolfville Ridge on Sep 11 (Judy says the noise was deafening).

On Aug 11, a juvenile brown-headed cowbird was being fed by an American redstart on Wolfville Ridge (JGT); and cowbirds were abundant with European starlings in a Canning farm yard on Sep 30 (NSBS,BNS).

Two reports of northern orioles (perhaps just one bird) came from Wolfville feeders on Nov 10 (BBT) and Nov 14 (JSB).

There were numerous reports of house finches. Single males were in Port Williams up to June 17 (MT) and in Wolfville on June 21 (BBT). In fall, three were reported in Wolfville on Oct 9 (ME) and from Nov 19 to Dec 6 (JSB), three in Port Williams in mid-November (LT) and one at Avonport on Nov 28 (EU).

Few purple finches were reported. They were common on the Acadia Nature Trail in Wolfville on Oct 6 (JW) and there were very small numbers at a few feeders from early October to early December in Wolfville (GT,WK,JW) and Middleton (JDK).

At Coldbrook on July 6, a banded pine siskin trapped itself inside a feeder. It was rescued and released (GM) (no information yet on the band). On July 1 at Avonport, Eva Urban saw an adult siskin feeding a juvenile. Siskins were also seen Sep 3 at Baxter's Harbour and reported at feeders in Wolfville and Kentville in November (JW,RS).

American goldfinches were with the siskins at Baxter's Harbour on Sep 3 (BBT). On Sep 9 at Avonport, goldfinches were still feeding their juveniles (EU). Also goldfinches were at feeders in Wolfville and on Wolfville Ridge through November (BBT,JGT,JW).

I didn't see any evening grosbeaks in my part of Wolfville until Nov 18. The only other report I have is of 19 at a Wolfville feeder on Dec 2 (WH).

There -- all caught up (for now)!



Contributors

GA	George Alliston	JMc	Jane McConnell
JDA	Jeannie & Don Allen	HFN	Halifax Field Naturalists
RBA	Rare Bird Alert	RRN	Ruth & Reg Newell
BB	Bob Bearne	EP	Eva Proszynska
CB	Calvin Brennan	LP	Leah Patterson
JSB	Sherman Bleakney	MP	Mary Pratt
JSEo	Sherman Boates	JPo	Janet Pope
CC	Chris Clarke	AR	Ann Ryan
GC	Gordon Callon	DR	Dick Rogers
LC	Lana Churchill	GR	Gerry Rathbun
CBC	CBC Radio	BS	Bev Shanks
CKC	Cyril Coldwell	ES	Edgar Spalding
KLC	Karen Casselman	FS	Francis Spalding
GD	Graham Daborn	GS	Gerry Schofield
HD	Harold Dobson	JS	Jack Scott
JD	John Deal	MS	Maynard Stevens
PD	Peter Dearman	NS	Norm Seymour
SD	Sheldon Davidson	RS	Richard Stern
ABD	Acadia Biol. Dept.	BNS	Blomidon Naturalists Soc.
ME	Mark Elderkin	PCS	Peter Smith
HF	Harold Forsyth	NSBS	Nova Scotia Bird Society
JF	Jim Foster	DT	Dianne Thorpe
BH	Ben Hamilton	GTh	Gordon Thorpe
DH	Don Harvie	JTI	Johnny Timpa
MH	Maxine Hill	DTo	Dan Toews
WH	Winnie Horton	BBT	Brenda & Bill Thexton
HCH	Halifax Chronicle Herald	JGT	Judy & Gordon Tufts
JDK	Joan & Don Keddie	EU	Eva Urban
SVK	Sam Vander Kloet	GW	Gertrude Waseem
FL	Fulton Lavender	JW	Jim Wolford
DM	Dan McAskill	SW	Sherman Williams
GM	Gregory McGraph	AREW	Anne, Ruth & Elinor Woolaver
JM	Jake MacDonald	BBY	Betty & Barry Yoell
KM	Kim Mawhinney	MZ	Marian Zinck
MM	Murray Martin		
TM	Terry Murphy		

SHUR - GAIN DIVISION / CANADA PACKERS INC.  
PORT WILLIAMS, N.S.

PRESENTS

# Wild Bird Seed

OPEN:  
Mon. - Fri.  
8:00 - 5:00  
Saturday:  
8:00 - 12:00

Shur-Gain  
Division



Shur-Gain  
Wildbird Feeders  
Club Card

Port Williams Retail Centre Only

10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----

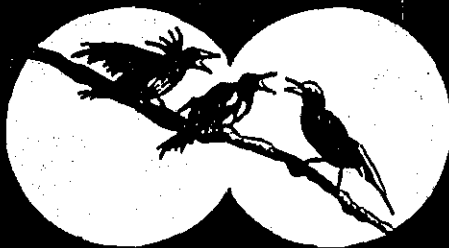
P.O. Box 10  
Port Williams, N.S.  
BOP 170  
(902) 542-2231

SHUR-GAIN

\*\*1 Stamp/\$10.00 Purchase \*\*  
\*\*\$20.00 Value when card is filled\*\*

SHUR-GAIN

Telescopes & Binoculars



# REID SWEET

BLOWERS & GRANVILLE 423-8381  
CLOSED ON SUNDAYS

Super sale on Pentax 7x50 zcf binoculars! Regular \$304 value on sale to BNS members for \$120 while quantities last. Simply present this ad at time of purchase.

1990 - 1991 Membership Fees

-----  
 Each member receives four issues yearly of this Newsletter. The Blomidon Naturalists Society is a registered charity. Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued for all donations. The membership fee itself is not tax-deductible.  
 -----

Please enclose a cheque or money order payable to "Blomidon Naturalists Society" and forward to:

Harold Forsyth  
 R.R. 2  
 Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0

<u>Number</u>	<u>Membership Classification</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Total</u>
_____	Individual Adult	\$10.00	\$ _____
_____	Family	\$12.00	\$ _____
_____	Individual Junior (less than 16 years old)	\$1.00	\$ _____
	Tax-deductible Donation		\$ _____
		TOTAL	\$ _____

My name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): Home \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type (please check one):

Ind. Adult\_\_ / Ind. Jr.\_\_ / Family\_\_ (# of family members\_\_)

Gift Subscriptions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): Home \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type (please check one):

Ind. Adult\_\_ / Ind. Jr.\_\_ / Family\_\_ (# of family members\_\_)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): Home \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Sources for Local Natural History Information  
(compiled by Blomdon Naturalists Society)

<u>Information</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Home</u>
Rocks & Fossils	Geol. Dept., Acadia Univ.	542-2201	
Fish	N.S. Dept. of Lands & Forests	679-6097	
Flora - General	Ruth Newell	542-2201	542-2095
Flora - Trees	Merritt Gibson	542-2201	582-7569
Flora - Fungi	Darryl Grund	542-2201	542-9214
Flora - Lichens	Nancy Nickerson	679-5333	542-9332
Flora - Seaweeds	Karen Casselman		633-2837
Flora - Mosses & Ferns	Darryl Grund	542-2201	542-9214
Birds - General	John Pickwell		681-8281
	Bernard Foreythe	542-2427	542-2427
	Richard Stern	678-4742	678-1975
	Peter C. Smith	542-2201	542-5998
	Gordon & Judy Tufts		542-7800
	Jim Wolford	542-2201	542-7650
	Jean Timpa		542-5678
Birds - Hawks & Owls	Bernard Foreythe		542-2427
	Cyril Caldwell	542-2201	542-2854
Birds - Falcons & Eagles	Peter Austin-Smith	678-8921	542-2109
Mammals	Tom Herman	542-2201	678-0383
Amphibians & Reptiles	Sherman Bleakney	542-2201	542-3604
	Jim Wolford	542-2201	542-7650
Seashore & Marine Life	Sherman Bleakney	542-2201	542-3604
	Jim Wolford	542-2201	542-7650
	Graham Daborn	542-2201	542-5373
	Michael Brylinsky	542-2201	582-7954
Indian Prehistory & Archaeological Sites	Ellis Gertridgs		542-2816
Astronomy	James Leiggs		542-3530
	Roy Bishop	542-2201	542-3992
	Larry Bogan	542-2201	678-0446
	Sherman Williams	542-3598	542-5104