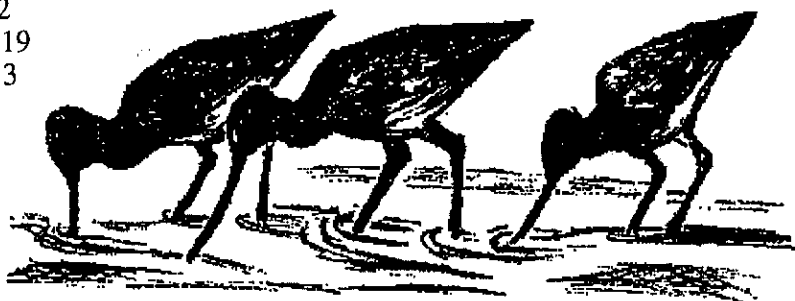


Blomidon Naturalists Society Newsletter

Fall 1992
Volume 19
Number 3



BNS Late Fall - 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.

November 16 -- The Natural History of the Eastern Phoebe

Kelvin Conrad, who recently returned to the area after completing his Ph.D. at Queens University, will provide us with new information about the Eastern Phoebe.

December 14 -- The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP)

Graham Daborn, Director of the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Studies, will speak about public involvement in conservation with particular reference to the innovative cooperative program that addresses environmental concerns regarding the Annapolis River.

January 18 -- Endangered Spaces in Nova Scotia

Colin Stewart, World Wildlife Fund's Endangered Spaces Coordinator for Nova Scotia, and President of the Halifax Field Naturalists, will bring us up to date on endangered spaces in the province.

Blomidon Naturalists Society Newsletter

Volume 19, Number 3, Fall 1992

Editors: George Alliston
 Margaret Alliston
 Art: Mary Pratt
 Production: Dick Rogers
 Distribution: Lana Churchill
 Brenda Thexton
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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.

The *BNS Newsletter* is printed on 100 percent recycled paper.

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40 page Newsletter

Field Trips

Since there are no field trips scheduled until after the publication of the next *Newsletter* in January, 1993, they will be announced in that issue.

Society Announcements and Business

Acknowledgements

Thanks this time to our September speaker; Derek Davis for showing us his slides of land and freshwater snails of Nova Scotia and telling us about their fascinating lives; to our many field trip leaders: Sherman Bleakney, Sherman Boates, Bernard Forsythe, Tom Herman, David Hope-Simpson, John Pickwell, P.C. Smith, Sherman Williams, and Jim Wolford (are you predisposed to being a field trip leader if your name is "Sherman"?); to all of the contributors to the *Newsletter*.

From the *Newsletter* editors, a special thanks to the few contributors whose manuscripts are always on time; to our BNS Executive, who worked so hard on our behalf over the past year; and to all of the *Newsletter* production team, old and new.

Conservation Committee and Nature Centre Committee were reviewed. A number of additional items were also discussed.

The Natural History of Kings County is due to hit the printers any day. It has been a long and arduous gestation, but the final product appears to be well worth the wait (and weight- it is truly a monumental work!).

The Parks are for People Programme of the N.S. Parks Division involved several field trips led by BNS members. They were generally successful, and we look forward to continued cooperation with that programme in future. We discussed further the possibility of BNS members carrying out inventories of flora and fauna in Blomidon Park. After his talk to BNS this past month, Derek Davis suggested that a BNS field trip to collect snails in the Park next year might be a good opportunity for such a joint venture. Watch the field trip listings in future *Newsletters*!

The Executive is still considering development of a dykeland trail beginning near the Robie Tufts Nature Centre and incorporating a small freshwater impoundment. We are contemplating a proposal to the Environmental Partners Fund, which also helped to fund construction of the Nature Centre.

The Executive was delighted with the performance of Sophie Ducharme, our summer student at the Nature Centre. As well as developing display material for panels, Sophie led a number of guided walks throughout the summer. She also left us with lots of constructive ideas for future summer

Notes from the BNS Directors

by Tom Herman
Kentville, N.S.

The BNS Executive met on May 21 and September 10, 1992. Regular items of business, including reports from the Treasurer, *Newsletter* Editor, Program Committee, Robie Tufts Award Committee,

employees.

BNS has been asked by the Nova Scotia Museum to contribute suggestions for the revision of the *Natural History of Nova Scotia*. The Executive feels that this is an important endeavour, and has asked Sherman Bleakney to coordinate our input. Sherman has kindly agreed to serve in this capacity. We have copies of the original edition available for loan, for anyone interested. Please contact Tom Herman or Jim Wolford at the Biology Department, Acadia University.

Our Special Publications Editor, Merritt Gibson, reminded us that he would appreciate receiving material from the membership for inclusion in the weekly "Nature Notes" column of the *Kentville Advertiser*. He would be glad to assist in the editing.

We also discussed the status of funding for the N.S. Endangered Spaces Campaign, including what role our society might play in raising funds. As yet, we have reached no firm decision, but will continue our discussions at the next Executive meeting.

Finally, due to the large number of "no shows" for the recent BNS trip to Bon Portage Island, we agreed to require a deposit for boat transportation for all future trips, and to reimburse partially the boat owner for his inconvenience and lost fishing time.

Acadia Biology Seminar Club Weekly Seminars

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. A ? after the topic indicates that it still must be confirmed.

October 29

Dr. Fred Herrington
Mount St. Vincent University
"Caribou" ?

November 5

Dr. Fred Scott
Nova Scotia Museum
to be announced

November 12

Tony Nette
N.S. Dept. of Natural Resources
"Wildlife Management" &
"Studies of Black Bears in Nova Scotia"

November 19

Peter Austin-Smith
"Ornithology of Shakespeare"

November 26

Dr. Ron O'Dor
Dalhousie University
"Travelog of Japan"

Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces

The 248-page Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces is an amazing collection of maps, illustrations and data collected by over 1100 volunteers to provide the first up-to-date and comprehensive picture of the distribution of birds that nest in the Maritimes. The detailed distribution maps and accompanying species accounts provide information on breeding distribution, population, and natural history with a forecast of each species' prospects for the future. Geographical and historical background information for understanding the distribution of birds in the Maritimes and a pocketed set of transparent overlay maps showing geographic, ecological, cultural and climatic information which can be placed over

the breeding area maps are also included. The Atlas is co-published by Nimbus Publishing and the Nova Scotia Museum and is available for \$29.95 at Nova Scotia bookstores.

Wolfville Christmas Bird Count

Join members of the Blomidon Naturalists Society and other people interested in birds for one of the highlights of the pre-Christmas season in Wolfville. The Wolfville Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 19, 1992, or, if the weather is bad, on Sunday, December 20, 1992. Everyone, novice or pro, is welcome. To learn the ropes, novices will be teamed with more experienced birders. After an invigorating day of counting birds, we'll get together for our traditional chowder supper and tally our results at the Acadia Biology Museum in Patterson Hall.

Angus MacLean, Merritt Gibson, and Peter Austin-Smith are in charge of arrangements this year. To participate, call Angus at 679-5878. A small fee will be charged to offset the costs of processing the data in the North American data base.

BNS Conservation Committee

No report was available for this issue.

BNS Newsletter Submissions Deadline - December 15, 1992

Please send or give all contributions to the *Newsletter* to:

George Alliston
174 West Brooklyn Road
R.R 3
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0
542-3651

Send submissions for "Trivial Tidbits" (non-bird items only) to Jim Wolford at:
Biology Department
Acadia University
Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

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

Richard Stern would like to receive observations for "Bird News" (for Kings, Hants and Annapolis Counties only) on migration dates, unusual numbers, nesting records, interesting behaviour and rarities, of course. Please forward your observations to him as soon as possible after they were made. Send observations to Richard Stern at:
40 MacDonald Park Road
Kentville, N.S. B4N 5C7

Last-minute observations can be phoned to Richard at 678-1975.

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.

Membership Fees

Membership fees, which cover the costs of producing and mailing four issues of the *Blomidon Naturalists Society Newsletter*, are due in January 1993. Renewal forms will be issued with the next issue of the *Newsletter* or complete the form in the back of this issue of the *Newsletter*. Annual fees are \$10.00 for an individual adult membership, \$12.00 for a family membership, and \$1.00 for an

individual junior membership (less than 16 years old). Members may also subscribe to the *FNSN News*, the newsletter of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, for an additional \$5.00 annually.

BNS Newsletter News

This *Newsletter* is the first to be published on our new schedule: January (to allow time to receive the Christmas Bird Count information), March, June and October (to allow time for everyone to get their manuscripts in at the start of a new season).

Richard Stern's "Bird News" makes its debut in this issue of the *Newsletter* - a worthy addition, we're sure you will all agree.

This is the first issue that Dick Rogers has laid out. He is using Publish It!, the same software package used previously by Larry Bogan, but on a Macintosh computer.

We still need someone to assume responsibility for the *Newsletter* advertising.

The *Newsletter* advertising person must follow up our regular contacts, lay out the ads, and contact more potential advertisers. Not only is it an opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to the success of our Society but it is also interesting to learn more about what's happening in our local business community. If you're prepared to help, please call the editors, George and Margaret Alliston, at 542-3651.

West Hants Christmas Bird Count

Mark Sunday, January 3, 1993, on your calendar for the only Christmas Bird Count whose social functions have been attended by live birds - an ailing Great Blue Heron that attended last year's post bird count festivities unfortunately did not survive them. Those humans who did struggle from dawn

to dusk birding in the wilds of West Hants were suitably rewarded with Frank's punch, Beth's beans, Karen's chocolate cheesecake and knee hugs from "Honey".

We need your help again this year, but here's the catch! Your co-ordinators will be away over Christmas. **SO IF YOU WANT YOUR CHOICE OF TERRITORY, YOU MUST** (read: "**YOU REALLY MUST**") contact us before December 20. Otherwise you regulars are charged with the responsibility of counting sufficient **Pileated Woodpeckers** to break our own record (14: that's a provincial Christmas Bird Count "high") and doomed to trudge the Cogmagun Woods Road yet another balmy Sunday in early January. (Don't laugh, it usually is!)

Owlers who register well in advance will be supplied with coffee and muffins and companionship should they require it. Owlers who hear more than they see will be accompanied by bird police. *Notwithstanding* (just like in the Constitution, folks), **help/support/cooperation from all birders** with sharp eyes, good ears and the best of intentions, is anticipated for this year's West Hants Christmas Bird Count, and will be greatly appreciated.

Karen and Ted Cassleman
Studio Vista
2018 Cheverie Road
Cheverie, Hants County, N.S.
B0N 1G0
Telephone: 633-2837

June 1992
Dear Friend,

Once in a while, a story comes along which demonstrates that we can save endangered species. Yes, this year's list is once again longer, but the future for the Peregrine Falcon which lives in Canada's Arctic is considerably brighter. It now joins the White Pelican and Wood Bison as successfully "downlisted" species.

This happened because many agencies across Canada, including the World Wildlife Fund, worked together to help this magnificent bird. Our shared victory is testimony to the fact that, with your help, we can rescue wildlife from the brink of extinction.

Sincerely,

Monte Hummel
World Wildlife Fund

Field Trip Reports

Ferns and Mosses

June 6, 1992

by John Pickwell
New Minas, N.S.

Although it looked as if rain, which was forecast, might descend upon us at any moment, six of us left the Robie Tufts Nature Centre and made our way to the Milne's Subdivision just below the New Minas water tower. On the south side of Highway 101, at the edge of the woods, we looked at Sensitive Ferns, *Onoclea sensibilis*, growing in the wet ground. Although only sterile fronds were up as yet, some of the dried fertile fronds from last year could be seen. Going further into the swamp, we looked at the Cinnamon Ferns, *Osmunda cinnamomea*, which were just about at their best. Growing by the stream we found two hybrids of the genus *Dryopteris*. They were *D. Bootii*, a common cross between *D. cristata* and *D. intermedia*. The other hybrid was one I

found for the first time in Nova Scotia only two years ago: *D. Slossonae*, a cross between *D. cristata* and *D. marginalis*. We also looked at *D. marginalis* itself growing at the base of the rocky outcrop that divides the swamp into two parts. From the outcrop, we collected two common mosses, *Dicranum scoparium* and *D. polysetum*. We were able to identify the components of what used to be called *D. spinulosa*; it is now divided into three species: *D. cathusiana*, *D. campyloptera*, and *D. intermedia*.

From the outcrop, we proceeded along the main centre path looking at another group of *D. Slossonae*. We also found New York fern, *Thelypteris novaboracensis*, in an early stage of growth, and Hayscented Fern, *Dennstaedtia punctilobula*. The Bracken Ferns, *Pteridium aquilinum*, were well developed. We saw both old and new fronds of the Christmas Fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*, along with two of the Tree Clubmosses, *Lycopodium obscurum* and *L. dendroideum*. Still on the centre path, we were able to compare the Interrupted Fern, *Osmunda claytoniana*, with



CINNAMON FERN

the other *Osmunda*, the Cinnamon Fern, seen previously.

We left the centre path to take a trail leading west to the so-called Hidden Valley.



SENSITIVE
FERN

Along this trail, at the edge of a stream, I was able to show a small saprophytic orchid that I believed to be the Northern Coral-root, *Corallorhiza trifida*. A little further down this trail were two Sphagnum Mosses, *Sphagnum palustre* and *S. Girgensohnii*. As well as ferns and mosses, we also observed Painted Trilliums, *Trillium undulatum*, in full flower, as well as lots of Corn Lilies, *Clintonia borealis*, and a number of kinds of Violets, both blue and white. We agreed that the white one was most likely *Viola canadensis*.

We crossed the stream and entered the valley, an area closed in on most sides by high rocks with a picturesque waterfall cascading down over the rocks at one end. At its base is a large boulder covered with Common Polypody, *Polypodium virginianum*. Here we found the other common Trillium, *T. erectum*, also in bloom. At one side of the valley, a wide gully runs up and out toward the power lines about 300 metres away. Here we found many more *Dryopteris* as well as hosts of Lady Ferns, both *Athyrium felix-femina* var. *Michauxii* forma *Michauxii* and forma *rubellum*, with its dark red stem. Growing nearby was another *Athyrium*, the Silvery Spleenwort, *A. thelypteroides*. Perhaps the prize of the day was a pair of Rattlesnake Ferns, *Botrychium virginianum* var. *virginianum*, now fully grown. Here we also

found another clubmoss, *Lycopodium lucidulum*. This is the only clubmoss to be found in this area that does not show strobili, the small cone-like structures, carrying the sporangia, that grow above the plant. The sporangia of this species are found at the base of some of the leaves. This species also produces small gemmae (plantlets) at the growth tips of the plant.

While still in the valley, we looked at two prominent lichens: Lungwort, *Lobaria pulmonaria* and, growing right beside it on some of the trees, *L. quercicans*. Growing on the humus nearby was another lichen I believe to be *Peltigera polydactyla*. On rocks in the stream was the Leafy Liverwort, *Scapania undulata*.

We now retraced our steps back to Highway 101. On the way, we found the dainty little Oak Fern, *Gymnocarion dryopteris*, and, looking like a miniature bracken, the Beach Fern, *Phegopteris connectilis*, and two more mosses: Shiny Moss, *Hypnum imponens*, and *H. cupressifore* var. *filiforme* which grows down over the rocks. We got back to our cars just in time for lunch and didn't even get wet.

President's Field Trip Meander River Intervale

June 13, 1992

by Tom Herman
Kentville, N.S.

Our hardy group set out mid-morning, braving the onslaughts of ravenous mosquitoes, to explore the wonders of the Meander River Intervale. It was not the best dragonfly weather, but I hid my disappointment as best I could. We started from the picnic site at Smiley's Park and worked our way upstream (east of the Park) amongst abundant Columbine.

With keen observers of all ages, we did not miss much. We discovered nests of a Veery along the trail and an Ovenbird well off the trail, and left with ample photographic records of each! We returned to the Park, ate our picnic lunch while being entertained by a Pileated Woodpecker, then walked along the edge of the picnic site toward the campground. We found some good populations of Blue Cohosh and Bloodroot immediately adjacent to the picnic ground, then moved down the campground road to check on the state of the Showy Lady's Slippers in the woods to the north. As we expected, they were a few weeks from flowering, but the crop looked promising.

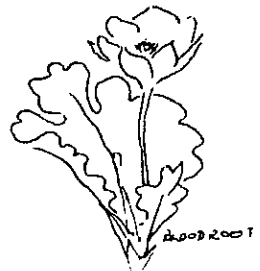
We then drove west to Rte. 215, parked where it crosses the Meander, and walked upstream to the proposed Meander Intervale Special Place. We took the "high" trail (on the south side) in, which afforded a breath-taking view (for those of us who still had any breath!) of the site. We then plunged down into the thick of it. The vegetation and the mosquitoes are both memorable! The site contains impressive trees, including some very large Black Cherries and lots of Ironwood. Herbaceous growth was extremely lush and varied (see list below).

We worked our way to the river, which we forded twice to circle back to the trail on which we had entered. When we reached the river we were treated to several glimpses of *Calopteryx amata*, a rare emerald coloured damselfly known in Nova Scotia from only several locations - for some of us a fitting end to the day's activities!

A partial list of herbs and shrubs observed at Meander during the excursion (including Smiley's and the candidate Special Place), compiled primarily by Ross Baker:

Large-leaved Aster
 Purple Avens
 Red Baneberry
 Beechdrops
 Bloodroot
 Blue-eyed Grass
 Bunchberry
 Field Chickweed
 Blue Cohosh
 Coltsfoot
 Columbine
 Cuckoo-flower
 Ox-eye Daisy
 Dandelion
 Curled Dock
 Feverwort
 Forget-me-not
 Goat's-beard
 Poison Ivy
 Jack-in-the-Pulpit
 Knapweed
 Showy Lady's Slipper
 Wild Lily-of-the-Valley
 Meadow Rue
 Black Medick
 Wild Mint

Common Mullein
 Wild Mustard
 Nightshade
 Orpine
 English Plantain
 Wild Sarsaparilla
 Scouring Rush
 Black Snakeroot
 Wood Sorrel
 Common Speedwell
 False Solomon's Seal
 Starflower
 Wild Strawberry
 Toothwort
 Touch-me-not
 Nodding Trillium
 Yellow Violet
 Virgin's Bower
 Beech Fern
 Bracken
 Christmas Fern
 Cinnamon Fern
 Interrupted Fern
 Sensitive Fern
 Oak Fern
 Ostrich Fern
 Chokecherry
 High-bush Cranberry
 Daphne
 Red Osier Dogwood
 Hobblebush
 Labrador Tea
 Shadbush



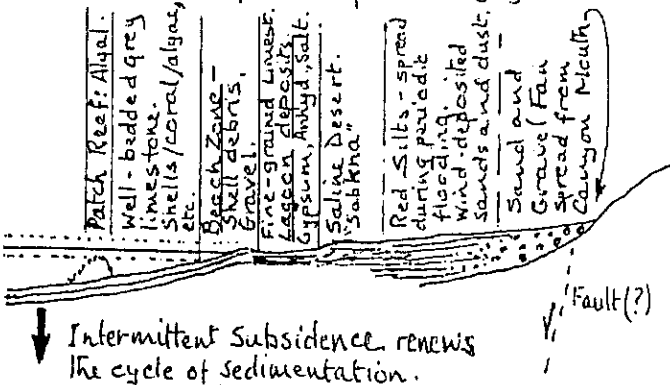
red, grey and black.

The second stop was at the bridge over the Kennetcook River on Highway 215. The characteristic sequences of limestone, gypsum and reddish-brown siltstones of the Windsor Group are exposed dipping variably southward along the west bank of the river for several hundred metres.

gypsum where it has been faulted against shattered and folded dark siltstones of the Horton Bluff. A nice feature that delighted one young participant is a deep, dark, lugubrious cave within the gypsum.

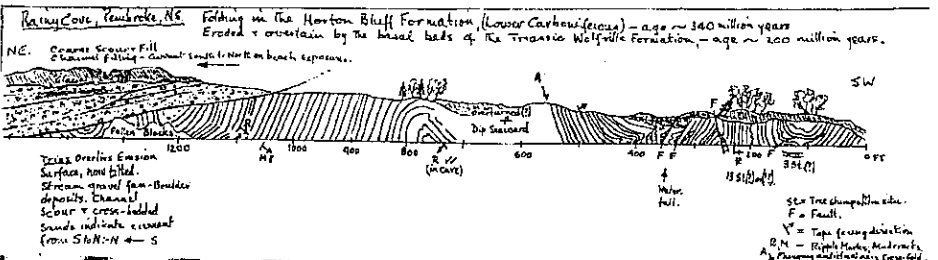
At stop four, a shore traverse for 500 metres westward from Rainy Cove at Pembroke beautifully exposes folding and faulting in the Horton Bluff, which also displays tree stumps, driftwood and ripple marks. The sequence at the western end is overlain by gently north-dipping, thick beds of boulder conglomerate and sandstone - fan deposits of Triassic age, washed in from the south during subsidence of the Triassic basin floor. We had to beat a hasty retreat as one can get cut off by the rising tide.

Environment of Windsor Gp. Hot, arid to semi-arid climate. Compare Persian Gulf. Subsiding marine basins and piedmont plains. Highly saline.



The third stop was at the shore, downhill and just north of Cheverie Church on Highway 215. After a picnic lunch there, we explored the gypsum - anhydrite cliff to the northeast which excellently displays plastic flowage and blocky fracture within the

range in age from two to nearly eighty, participated. The weather was great and scenically it is a nice stretch of shore. There are, however, few places to buy drinks or food along that shore - or for comfort stops.



A Walk in Blomidon Provincial Park

June 24, 1992

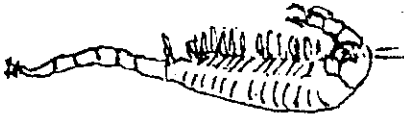
by Jim Wolford
Wolfville, N.S.

About 15 people joined me on this "Parks are for People" aimless evening stroll along Blomidon Park's cliff trail. We walked slowly, enjoying the early summer forest and noting flowers of baneberry, mountain maple, wild lily-of-the-valley, false Solomon's-seal, starflower and clintonia.

The woodland pond about 1.5 km from the campground usually offers many interesting features, especially Nova Scotia's only documented fairy shrimps that were discovered there in May, 1988. Therefore, I arm myself with a dip-net, enamel pan and bucket.

This year that pond, normally quite large in early summer, was almost totally dried up, thanks to our 1991 and 1992 seasonal droughts. Most of the "pond" was covered by a lush carpet of sensitive ferns; only two tiny "pools" contained water.

My dip-net showed us that life was very



FAIRY SHRIMP

abundant and concentrated in those pools. We saw only one fairy shrimp, but there were oodles of small red "water fleas". Also seen there were: lots of fairly large but still legless tadpoles of wood frogs(?), one small toad or peeper tadpole, several small larvae of salamanders (yellow-spotted?), large damselfly larvae, small dragonfly larvae, water boatmen, water striders, caddisfly larvae in cases, two kinds of small adult diving

beetles, a whirligig beetle, phantom midge larvae and their (?) abundant pupae, a water mite, and small snails.

It is normal for the fairy shrimps to have laid eggs and disappeared by this time of year; they are adapted to temporary run-off ponds, and many of them have eggs that require drying and freezing to hatch.

Some of our amphibians (e.g. wood frog) are also adapted for spring reproduction in ephemeral ponds, but the dry conditions at this pond will probably result in the total mortality of tadpoles. Many of the same adult amphibians will return to this pond next year for another try.

Natural History of Blomidon Beach

July 15, 1992

by Sherman Boates
Wolfville, N.S.

The weather looked ideal for a tromp in the mud. I didn't even bother to throw a sweater in the car because it was hot and the sky was clear. When I got past Delhaven and I could see the Cape in the distance, I knew I had made a big mistake. A huge and spectacular bank of cold foggy air was billowing over the North Mountain and was sliding down the red sandstone cliff onto the beach where I was scheduled to lead my mudwalk. By the time I arrived at lower Blomidon, it was cold, damp and very windy. It is usually difficult to convince people to toss aside their shoes and walk in the mud even on a sunny day!

Despite the local weather, the turnout and the enthusiasm was good. We had well over 30 people (at least at the beginning) which included some kids and some seasoned adults. Initially we practiced finding things in the mud and honing the skills needed to fully appreciate the beauty of this habitat. After that I was busy chatting and answering

questions as people discovered things in the mud and brought them to my attention. We had good glimpses at the behaviour of many mudflat critters including: the omnipresent shorebird snack, *Corophium*, magnificent milky ribbon worm everting its proboscis, a marine sowbug eating *Corophium*, three species of clams, hermit crabs (an entertaining favourite) and a merlin. It was enjoyable even though everything got dirty, even the weather!

Incidentally, I have noticed over the years during my ramblings on mudflats kilometers from shoreline at high tide, that local and quick changes in weather often occur as the tide turns and begins to come back in. This can be very uncomfortable; one minute you can be close to sun stroke and the next close to hypothermia! If you are taking a long hike in the intertidal zone, it is a good idea to carry an extra shirt. It can also be useful to remember that if the weather quickly turns cold and foggy, or a cool wind comes up, the tide has turned and you might want to think about getting back to the high tide shoreline.

Bon Portage Island

August 1, 1992 - August 3, 1992

by Richard Stern
Kentville, N.S.

As my family and two others were the only people who turned up this will be a rather personalized account of a most enjoyable long weekend. The trip over to the Island from Shag Harbour was a major adventure in itself as on arrival at Shag Harbour there was torrential rain and high wind, with whitecaps buffeting the fishing boats at anchor. "Don't worry" said Anthony the skipper - "it's not too bad, we've been out in a lot worse". Luckily there were only six of us, and everyone was too scared and concentrating on hanging on to some fixed part of the boat to be seasick, but we made it in one piece, including the transfer

by small open boat from Anthony's Cape Islander to the slipway. We were greeted by Peter Smith of Acadia University and made to feel immediately at home, as he had prepared the bunkhouses and had got the wood stoves going.

From that point, the weather forecast was accurate and it soon cleared, and by evening the wind had dropped and the sun was out. We walked through the woods and around to the lighthouse, observing the dense Spruce festooned with Old Man's Beard, and the forest floor was covered in Skunk Redcurrants (they look like Redcurrants and smell like Skunk, and are reputed to make an interesting jelly). Some of the resident Fox Sparrows were in evidence, together with lots of Song Sparrows.

At 11:30 p.m. Peter Smith arrived from the lighthouse, together with a Leach's Storm-petrel that had blundered into him, and we went out into the woods again. He told us about these remarkable birds - about how the adults only come and go at night and return to the burrow to feed the single chick only every two or three days, and how they are true to the same mate and the same burrow, and how to distinguish the different calls of the two sexes under different conditions, and many other fascinating facts. Meanwhile the air was full of their weird cackles as they fluttered like bats all around us, and frequently came blundering through the trees as they searched for the right burrow. Meanwhile above the clearings was a perfect star-filled night, with the Milky Way arching across the entire sky, and all the prominent Summer constellations brilliant in the sky only otherwise lit by the new moon.

Next day we spent all day going around the perimeter of the Island, and the other 2 ladies did the same in the opposite direction. Liz kept reading extracts from We Keep a Light, Evelyn Richardson's wonderful book about her life on the Island when her husband was the lightkeeper, and that made many

localities really come alive. All the time Shorebirds were coming and going along the shore, Short billed Dowitchers, Ruddy Turnstones and Willets being particularly prominent. Common Terns were feeding in Salt Water Pond, and thousands of Gulls were all over the place and almost over-running the Island. A very white Egret with no long plumes, but black legs and yellow feet and apparently pale lores appeared briefly enough to make it impossible to say for sure whether it was one of the three resident Snowy Egrets or the single resident ultra-rare and almost identical-looking Little Egret, a vagrant from Europe. The location, the fact that it was alone, and in depth discussions with Peter (and lots of wishful thinking!) made me think on balance it was the Little Egret, and later I went back and did a lot of searching (including several falls into the bog) but I could not find it. Very frustrating!

All over the beach were round granite pebbles, polished by the waves, so that the large patches of mica made them sparkle.

That night we went Petrel-hunting again, but this time we were preempted as one flew in through the open window into our bunkhouse and we had to catch and rescue it. Again the stars were beautiful.

The next morning we wandered around the southern (lighthouse) end of the Island, and were able to observe more of the resident bird life, including Blackpoll Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Redstarts (all feeding young) and Boreal Chickadees and more Fox Sparrows - great to see these, as elsewhere in the Province one only sees them briefly on migration. We were also able to observe some Meadow Vole tracking research taking place.

General highlights of the weekend otherwise included the great weather, and the hospitality of Peter and Linda Smith, who fed cookies non-stop to our boys, beat us at Scrabble, and gave Tom some most

memorable marine artifacts. We certainly thank them most sincerely for their generosity and organization. A final bonus just before we packed up to leave (in sunshine and calm) was the very brief appearance of a rare Black-billed Cuckoo flitting through the raspberry canes.

So from a naturalists viewpoint there was something for everyone - birds, botany, geology and astronomy, as well as interesting history, beautiful scenery and good company, so all I can say to the no-shows is, "look what you missed and go next year!"

Cape Blomidon

August 1, 1992

The Guzzle

August 2, 1992

by Sherman Bleakney
Wolfville, N.S.

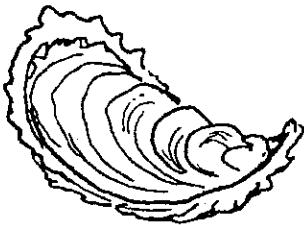
Our Cape Blomidon tide-pool foray was a wash-out both figuratively and literally. Dire storm predictions from the weather bureau reduced your intrepid leader to a decrepit weather wimp. My sincere apologies for underestimating the fortitude of BNS naturalists such as Lana A., Jim W., and the Wright family. However, from personal experience, instructional tide-pool exploration on a windy, rainy day is totally unsatisfactory.



On August 2, the weather ameliorated, which encouraged 16 naturalists and history buffs to tether their transports at Grand Pre's northeast corner, surmount the dyke wall and plunge down slope into The Guzzle and into

the past. This particular intertidal venture really was a trek through time.

Mere decades ago, The Guzzle gap between Long Island and Boot Island was much narrower and rather shallow. Boot Island was inhabited, families farmed the island and set shad gill nets on the tidal flats. We saw rows and rows of the bases of the actual poles that supported those nets. Many are birch poles, last driven into those sediments about 70 to 90 years ago.



Mere centuries ago, during the time of the Acadians, The Guzzle did not exist, the Grand Pre tidal marshes and the Boot Island marshes were contiguous, and a wagon track connecting Long Island and Boot Island is plotted on 18th century maps. Erosion of the Evangeline shoreline over nearly three centuries has left the ghost of that road suspended some 30 feet in the air over the present Guzzle channel. And the inexorable crumbling of this coast continues, evident in the huge chunks of marshland sliding down slope in The Guzzle, chewed off by wind, wave and rising sea levels. We turned north and walked two km directly towards Cape Blomidon.

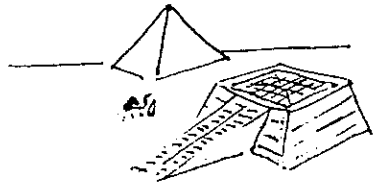
Mere millennia ago, the peat deposits and alder thickets, the stumps and fallen tree trunks, that we now trod upon, formed a forest of giant white pine and hemlock. These drowned and sediment entombed trees had lain undisturbed for over 4,000 years, and only in this century has the scouring action of the newly formed Guzzle channel revealed not

only forest giants, but marshes, clam beds and large oysters. Carbon-14 datings obtained from selected plant and animal samples range from 1,700 years to 4,400 years in age. The Guzzle has become a time trench, cutting vertically down through nearly 5,000 years of Minas Basin history. At the time of oysters, about 4,000 years ago, the Basin was shallow, warm, and brackish with a tidal amplitude of less than two metres.

Oh yes, we did manage some biology as well. With Jim's able assistance, we probably once again demonstrated that the intertidal flats of Minas Basin are actually a carpet of wall-to-wall hungry mouths, in many different forms. We even explored with our noses, sniffing the potent, repulsive odour of ruptured sulphur sponge tissue, and contrasted that with the lovely citronella perfume of the pom-poms of live *Flustra* animal colonies.

Two hours out and two hours to hike back, just in time to examine carpets of sand-grain tubes, grains cemented together with great precision by tiny worms. Further exploration of tide pools at the bottom of The Guzzle, near the car park, we cut short by an audible rush of tidal waters -- from both ends of The Guzzle, simultaneously!

In all, a tiring but rewarding four-hour hike. The very special reward was, of course, each personally collected 3,800-year-old oyster shell. Reflect on this: at the time these delicately sculptured oyster valves were filtering the fertile flows of Fundy, Egyptian Pharaohs were funneling funds into structures funerary.



Natural History of Blomidon

August 12, 1992

by Bernard Forsythe
Wolfville, N.S.

Twenty people showed up for this "Parks are for People" outing on a calm but cold evening. Other than small numbers of kinglets, chickadees, and the odd warbler sounds high in the trees, there was very little bird activity. However, the plant life was another story. It would take longer than the time available to look at the great variety of plants in the coniferous woods below and the deciduous woods above the campgrounds of the park. The group was given a challenge to see who would be the first to find spiked lobelia, *Lobelia spicata*. This rare plant has long been known to grow on top of Cape Blomidon. Many of the shrubs and trees were heavy with fruit and were looked at and discussed. The early spring flowers had developed seed pods contrasting with the many species of goldenrods and asters just beginning to bloom. Several species of orchids were looked for and found along with herb-Robert, a wild geranium.

By the time we reached the large open area next to the campgrounds there were comments as to whether anyone would find spiked lobelia. I watched as a several people almost stepped on a couple of them in full bloom but finally one was discovered and soon their blue-flowered spikes were found in several places.

We went into the hardwoods at the top of Blomidon where we looked at orchids, wild leeks just past flower, and hazelnuts that would soon be carted away by blue jays and small mammals. Because of darkness we were forced to head back to our cars. It was surprising to see how tame the snowshoe hares were. Several were out in open fields and could be closely approached.

It was now dark but I wanted to show a



purple fringed orchid in the ditch part way down the mountain so we stopped to admire it using a flashlight. Hunting plants after dark by flashlight was probably another first for the BNS! As we finally headed home, a full moon reflecting off the calm waters of Minas Basin provided an image long to be remembered.

Cape Split Hike

September 5, 1992

by Sherman Williams
Avonport, N.S.

The day began a bit grey; however, as time advanced, the sky gradually brightened with sunshine. This provided ideal hiking conditions for the twelve hikers who set off on the BNS hike to Cape Split. Time taken to examine items of interest along the way extended the outbound portion of the hike to about three hours.

The enroute highlight probably was the cluster of "stinkhorn" fungi, *Mutinus caninus*, found among the debris of rotting hardwood logs at the trail edge. This fungus has a small horn-shaped stalk that projects upward from a white oval "egg" at the base. The pinkish to red stalk is 6-10 cm long and 10-12 mm thick; the head tapers at the top and is covered with a foul smelling, greenish brown slime. The specimens were certainly living up to their



"STINKHORN"

name; the presence of flies told the purpose of the slime and fetid odour. The top of each horn contains the spores for future stinkhorns. When examined on the return trip a few hours later, the height and maturity of one stinkhorn had quite noticeably increased, attesting to the fact that the fruiting body of fungi often shows rapid development.

The view and atmosphere that greeted us upon arriving at the Split made the hiking effort worthwhile. Everyone found a spot to their liking, sat down, relaxed and ate lunch while enjoying the view and listening to the rush of the tidal currents. For once the breeze was light.

While in this mode, the group was read a quote from the Observers Handbook of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The paragraph is from the section discussing the tidal influence of the Moon and Sun.

"Perhaps the most awesome place to observe the tides on our planet is at Cape Split, Nova Scotia... Here, at the time of the mid-point of the incoming tide, for a considerable distance the forest is filled with a hollow roar produced by the turbulence of the waters surging past the rugged cliffs below. The currents exceed 8 knots (4 m/s and the flow in the deep, 5 km-wide channel on the north side of Cape Split approximates the combined flow of all the streams and rivers of Earth (approximately 5 cubic km/h). Three hours later the spectacle pauses, and then begins flowing in the opposite direction."

Our tidal contemplation was broken when the dark forms of porpoises were seen breaking the water in among the currents and eddies. With binoculars trained on the appropriate patch of water, the next sighting of an arching black form was awaited. Later a loon, a few cormorant and several dozen eider were observed in the water near the rock pinnacles at the foot of the Split. Brightly-coloured orange lichens, sedum showing a tinge of pink, and blue harebells (*Campanula* sp.) provided touches of colour to the barren

cliff faces and narrow rock ledges.

From an oriented map of the area, landmarks on the more distant shoreline were identified. The whole view has a 270 deg sweep from Ross Creek and Bennett Bay on the Kings County shore to Port Greville and Diligent River on the Cumberland County side. Looking down the Bay, the skyline is punctuated with the steep-sided shoulders of Isle Haute (Glooscap's upturned canoe). A little more to the right is the Cape d'Or headland and the higher ridge that hides Advocate Harbour from our view.

The hike continued back along the lower trail toward Little Split Cove where we enjoyed several scenic views of the Split and the rugged, wind-exposed shoreline along Scots Bay. To rejoin the main upper trail, we puffed and panted up through the blackberry thicket and the section of the trail where the yellow birches "stand on their toes". From here began the return trek to Scots Bay. We stopped for an occasional rest and again viewed the stinkhorn. Eventually, around 4:00 p.m., all had arrived back at the parking lot, a bit tired, but satisfied that it had been a good day's adventure.



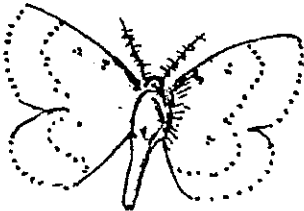
Methals Pond Canoe Trip

September 13, 1992

by Bernard Forsythe
Wolfville, N.S.

Four canoes left Methals Dam on a bright windless day, perfect weather for such an outing. Just as we entered the dead stumps of Methals Flowage I tried a barred owl call and got a long series of "who-cooks-for-youall" replies, as well as screaming blue jays that began to pester the owl rudely aroused by a potential rival. After weaving around the picturesque dead stumps, a stop was made at Methals Bog. For several in the party it was their first visit to a bog so we all tried jumping on the area of quaking bog. The resulting sensation is always enjoyed even by us older kids in the group.

Although there was lots to look at, other than a few goldenrods, most of the flower season had passed for another year. Cranberries and huckleberries were sampled. Cotton grass, several species of orchids with seed pods, mushrooms, insect-eating plants, as well as the many bog shrubs were admired. Someone identified the bog plant *Scheuchzeria palustris* and those braver than me even tried to pronounce its name. Some insect life was noted. Rick Whitman identified a couple of pretty moths as chain-spotted geometers. Their larva will feed on a great variety of bog shrubs and even young coniferous trees. Part of this bog had been defoliated several years ago by a horde



CHAIN-SPOTTED GEOMETER

of inchworms and this species may have been responsible.

The next stop was on a small island in Methals Lake where we had lunch. Entertainment was provided by several pairs of tandem flying dragonflies depositing eggs in the water beside our island. The afternoon was spent canoeing around the lake. Some maples were already showing fall colours. One stop was made to hike into an eagle nest that was occupied last year. We found the nest had fallen and the nest tree had been spiked by unknown people.

The field trip announcement had promised orchids. Nodding ladies'-tresses and its close relatives are our only orchids still blooming by mid-September. We made a couple of stops along Methals Road and found several in full flower. They all proved to be yellow ladies'-tresses, *Spiranthes ochroleuco*.

The outing ended late in the afternoon and from the warm thank you's, I would say it was enjoyed by everyone.

Late Shorebirds

September 26, 1992

by Jim Wolford
Wolfville, N.S.

A beautifully warm, calm, sunny day resulted in a ten car caravan carrying about 25 people (mostly from the Nova Scotia Bird Society) on this joint N.S. Bird Society, Blomidon Naturalists Society field trip.

Our first **highlight** occurred at the Robie Tufts Nature Centre where a large nestling rock dove had prematurely fallen out of its nest. Jennifer Wright got up on my shoulders and replaced the squab in the nest, and one of its parents immediately attended to it.

After the rock dove incident we viewed the very high tide at the Wolfville wharf and at Port Williams, and proceeded to Harris'

Pond in Canning. On our way, at the Canning aboiteau (Habitant River), there were several diving double-crested cormorants, a kingfisher, and a big mixed flock of European starlings and cowbirds.

At Harris' Pond, we had good looks at five American wigeons, four mallards, three blue-winged teal, American black ducks, six greater yellowlegs (including three "swimming" or walking up to their bellies), six pectoral sandpipers, a killdeer, and many gulls (including two ring billed gulls).

**O u r
s e c o n d
h i g h l i g h t**

came from one participant who wandered away from us - she found, would you believe, eight painted turtles on a bicycle! Someone had dumped a new looking mountain bike into the pond, and the seat, handle bars and

a tire were basking perches for the turtles.

Also at Harris' Pond was a very attractive large clump of Jerusalem artichokes. This plant seems to be spreading very rapidly through our region.

Then we drove to Grand Pre and across the dykeland, where we viewed a single raven on the ground and two flying northern harriers.

We parked the cars at The Guzzle, the narrow channel between the mainland and Boot Island. On a small gravel/mud beach, we saw a small sandpiper (white-rumped?) dragging a badly damaged wing, plus five dunlins, a sanderling, a few semipalmated

plovers, and several semipalmated sandpipers.

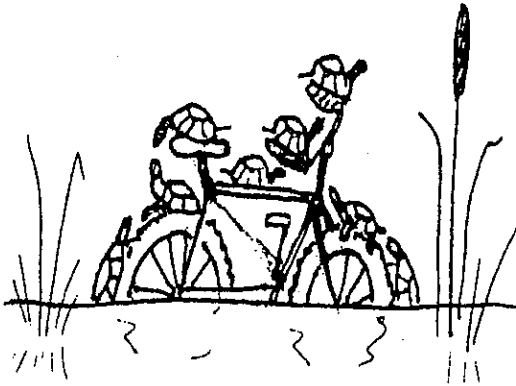
We walked on the dyke to the east end of Evangeline Beach where the tide had now receded too far for good observation (my fault). However, there were not many shorebirds in sight.

Roger Pocklington tip-toed out onto the intertidal mud, and by scanning (while we sat) saw a distant merlin that was chasing a small shorebird. We also saw a distant flock of moulting male common eiders. (Some friends of mine saw ten golden plovers, two black-

bellied plovers, white-winged scoters, and a few red-throated loons there the same day.)

For three successive years now our searches at Grand Pre for late-migrating shorebirds have been quite unproductive. Presumably the late-migrating

shorebirds, such as black-bellied plovers, are now utilizing another locality for roosting and foraging - perhaps the Windsor Causeway mudflat?



Articles

Taking a Close Look

by Bernard Forsythe
— Wolfville, N.S.

Three years ago while driving my mail route in Greenwich, I noticed a large clump of showy flowers, new to me, along the roadside. Thinking that sometime I should stop to key them out, I simply admired their many inch-wide rose purple blossoms until mid-August of this year when curiosity finally got the best of me. Many were more than two metres tall and resembled fireweed except that the leaves were toothed and continued to the top of the flower spike. The blossoms were at the end of long seed pods and had notched petals. Willow herbs came to mind but, except for fireweed, any I had seen have tiny inconspicuous flowers.

From my field guides, the plant appeared to be hairy willow herb, *Epilobium hirsutum*, but it is very rare in Nova Scotia with only one record listed in the Flora of Nova Scotia. This was exciting enough to show Ruth Newell, who checked in the



herbarium at Acadia University and informed me that the plants were indeed *E. hirsutum*. She also told me that it is a common garden flower in parts of Europe.

Where did the Greenwich colony come from? Do some flower gardens in Nova Scotia have hairy willow herb in them? I had not seen it before but then I do not usually look at cultivated flower gardens. Perhaps some persist around old abandoned homesteads somewhere. It certainly is a beautiful enough flower to enhance any garden. If anyone knows of other places where *E. hirsutum* grows, I would be interested in hearing about it.

It took three years but I finally took that close look and was rewarded.

Bird Feeding Boon or Bane? *

**Does the extra food we provide
help some species to increase in numbers
-- at the expense of others?**

Are people who feed birds unwittingly causing the decline of migratory bird populations? According to Project FeederWatch, a winter bird feeding survey sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the answer seems to be no.

Concern for migratory birds has been mounting in recent years. Surveys suggest that many populations have declined seriously over the past decade. In his recent book, Where Have All the Birds Gone?, ornithologist John Terborgh discusses the possible causes.

He mentions deforestation on the

neotropical wintering grounds and fragmentation of breeding habitat in North America, which most biologists agree are the main problems. But he suggests that bird feeding may be a worry as well. He wonders whether feeders may be causing increases in birds such as Brown-headed Cowbirds, which are nest parasites, or Blue Jays, which are notable nest robbers. If so, he reasons, then bird feeding may be inadvertently contributing to the declines of many forest-dwelling species, such as warblers and vireos, that never even visit feeders.

To examine this possibility, Cornell ornithologist Erica H. Dunn turned to information from Project FeederWatch as well as data from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), a continentwide survey of bird numbers in spring. She used the FeederWatch data to determine which feeder species are most widespread in North America, and the BBS data to learn which of them had been increasing and which had been decreasing during the past 25 years.

Surprisingly, she discovered that 70 percent of the most widespread feeder birds showed significantly declining populations. These included not only the nest-robbing Blue Jay, but also nest-site competitors such as the European Starling and House Sparrow, as well as several other species often considered "pests". The Brown-headed Cowbird also declined, although not as much as many others. These findings don't mean these species are not hurting migratory birds through their predatory or parasitizing actions, but it does suggest that feeding them is not increasing their populations.

These observations raise another question - is bird feeding bad for bird populations? Are species such as the Blue Jay being hurt by the practice?

Probably not. Most of the declining feeder species belong to groups that are declining as a whole - even though some species in those groups don't visit feeders.

These include mimids (thrashers and mockingbirds), towhees, certain blackbirds, and sparrows - birds that nest primarily in grassland or shrub habitats, which are also declining.

Bird feeding may harm some species, however. One study in England shows that regular feeding induced some Blue Tits and Great Tits to nest in suburban areas rather than their natural habitat, deciduous woodland. The suburban nesters showed very poor reproductive success because natural foods, especially the insects needed to feed nestlings, were in short supply. We don't know whether Blue Jays are responding to feeding by nesting in suburbia, only to suffer insupportable predation by cats and raccoons. We do know that American Robins, which often nest in suburbia, are showing population increases nationwide.

Conclusive evidence for the effects of bird feeding on bird populations awaits more detailed studies of each species. Meanwhile, bird feeding does not seem to cause increases in most of the species that frequent feeders, including "pest" species.

If you feed birds in your backyard and you'd like to contribute to an international effort to monitor bird populations, now is the time to sign up for the 1992-93 FeederWatch season. Participants receive a complete instruction packet, data forms, and a subscription to *FeederWatch News*, a biannual newsletter that covers not only FeederWatch results but bird feeding tips, notes on feeder bird behavior, and more. For information on how to join, write to: Project FeederWatch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850, or call (607) 254-2414.

* Reprinted with permission from

FeederWatch News, Autumn 1992

Cornell Ornithologists Warn Against Antifreeze Chemical in Bird Baths*

Mixing glycerine with water in winter bird baths could harm the birds that drink and bathe in the water warn experts at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Furthermore, the risky practice is not particularly effective for lowering the freezing point of water, the ornithologists found, and they recommend electric heaters instead.

"There's no question that birds need help finding water in the winter when their natural water sources freeze," says Todd Culver, the Lab's Education Specialist. "Bird baths that don't freeze are a good supplement to feeders for attracting birds."

However, recent articles in magazines and newspapers around the country have recommended using glycerine, an alcohol-like chemical, as a bird-bath antifreeze. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has responded to dozens of inquiries from concerned bird watchers.

The Cornell ornithologists conducted experiments and consulted with wildlife veterinarians. They found two problems with using glycerine in bird baths:

"Rather large concentrations of glycerine must be used to prevent a water bath from freezing," says Gregory Butcher, director of the Lab's Bird Population Studies Program. "In order to lower the freezing point to 15 deg F, for example, you need a 30-percent glycerine solution," he said of the chemical, which is a low-level toxin, and has a sweet taste. "Birds that ingest large amounts of the substance will experience elevated blood sugar levels, causing hyperglycemia and possibly death."

"Many birds bathe and preen themselves in cold weather," says Culver. "If you use enough glycerine to prevent the water from freezing, it causes the feathers to

mat. Birds bathe and preen to enhance the insulation value of their feathers. Matted feathers are poor insulators and can be fatal in cold temperatures."

A better solution to the frozen bird bath problem is an electric immersion-style heater, which costs only pennies per day to operate, the Cornell ornithologists recommend. More information on providing a watering hole is available by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope (international postal coupon required) to:

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
EIS Dept. N4C
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Wolfville Chimney Swifts Update

by Jim Wolford
Wolfville, N.S.

During the spring and summer of 1992 swifts confined all their roosting activity to the Robie Tufts Nature Centre (RTNC). The first sighting of chimney swifts in Wolfville was on May 13 when 52 birds were observed entering the RTNC chimney. Numbers increased to about 250 on May 19-20 then dropped to between 100 and 150. On May 28-29 numbers rose to 500-600 birds after which numbers fell to 150 to 200 birds and remained in that range through early July. (An exception occurred on June 25 when an estimated 267+ entered the chimney -- much to the enjoyment of an Elderhostel class at Acadia!) From July 7 to July 20 numbers rose to between 225 and 300+. From July 30 to August 5 numbers remained quite consistent -- between 210 and 235. After August 7-8, when 115 to 125 birds were counted, numbers quickly fell to a single bird on August 15. Our last sighting was on August 18 when six

swifts flew over, but not into, our chimney.

Each year in late July and early August we anticipate a rapid increase in the numbers of roosting birds as adults that had successfully nested, along with their young, join the non-nesting immatures and failed-nesting adults that we believe use the chimney from mid-June through July. Each year for the past three years we have not witnessed the expected large increase in swift numbers in late July and early August. Perhaps the migrating adults and their young are roosting elsewhere?

From at least July 15 to August 7 the Wolfville swifts displayed some different and rather interesting pre-roosting behaviour. During this period the pre-roosting flocking of the swifts occurred at high altitudes; so high that the chattering birds could hardly be seen without binoculars. The actual funneling into the chimney was quite abrupt without the low swirling to which we've become accustomed in other years*

I believe that this altered behaviour was in response to merlins in Wolfville. (A nesting pair of merlins produced fledged young in early August.) Single merlins were seen at the RTNC at dusk on July 19,20,21,22, and August 7. On at least three of these occasions, the reaction of the swifts was quick and impressive. Many of them formed a tight flock that targeted the merlin and chased it very quickly out of sight! (I had witnessed similar behaviour at University Hall in a past summer.)

Another interesting event occurred on the evening of June 9. As about 120 swifts were entering the chimney, Gary Boates was close enough to witness one bird "missing" the target - it crashed into the top of the chimney and fell down to the ground, dead with a broken neck. This bird was mounted by Cyril Coldwell and, together with a real nest, is now part of a new display at the RTNC.

"Morning" departure times from the chimney were observed five times this

summer. Note the variability in times:

May 20 - 9:40 a.m.

May 23 - 10:15 a.m.

June 6 - 8:45 a.m.

July 22 - 12:10 p.m.!

July 30 - 1:00 p.m.!

Spectacular aerial copulations by swifts were witnessed during the daytime in Wolfville on June 2 and June 7 by Jake MacDonald.

Despite the fact that the swifts were not present in large numbers this year, good numbers of spectators were present on most evenings during the latter half of the "season" to watch the swifts flock together and then finally funnel into the chimney. Many were tourists from many parts of the world and they were generally treated to good displays by the swifts.

Finally I'd like to acknowledge the contribution by the approximately ten "regular" evening observers at the chimney. Without them our data on swift numbers would be poor.

Weather Statistics - Summer 1992

by George Alliston
West Brooklyn, N.S.

If we were to look only at the overall weather statistics for the entire summer, we would conclude that the summer of 1992 was rather average but somewhat dry with rainfall amounting to only 76 percent of the thirty-year average. Our memories of this past summer are somewhat different, however. A seasonable June was followed by a very cool July in which mean temperatures were a full 2.3 deg C below the long-term average. On seven days in July, normally the warmest month of the year, minimum temperatures dropped into the single digits and, on July 4, the minimum temperature recorded at the Kentville Agricultural Centre

was 5 deg C -- rather close to a frost! Things improved in both August and September when average temperatures were 0.8 deg C and 1.4 deg C, respectively, above the 30-year average. Rainfall in June and July was about average but in August dropped to only 38 percent of average and, in September, was still only 75 percent of average. Only 50

mm of rain fell between July 14 and September 8.

In 1992 summer only began in late July but as I write this in mid-October, it is still with us (I went swimming in Lumsden Pond on October 9) and has been well worth waiting for!

Weather Statistics - Summer 1992
 recorded at the Kentville Agricultural Centre
 (30-year averages - 1951-1980 - in parentheses)

Month	Mean Temp. deg C	Rain mm	Bright Sunshine Hours	Growing Degree Days Above 10 deg C
June	15.9 (15.9)	68.2 (71.2)	195.6 (209.3)	169.5 (177.9)
July	16.9 (19.2)	77.0 (70.2)	212.1 (231.8)	213.9 (284.0)
August	19.2 (18.4)	37.0 (98.1)	229.5 (212.8)	286.5 (261.8)
September	15.7 (14.3)	64.6 (85.5)	176.8 (162.5)	175.5 (134.0)
Total or Average	16.9 (17.0)	246.8 (325.0)	814.0 (816.4)	845.4 (857.7)

TRIVIAL TIDBITS

of Local Natural History

mid-May to early October, 1992

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

Note to readers: We need more contributors for
non-bird phenomena!
Universe

Sept 10 - small show of aurora borealis over Port Williams (MT).

July 15 - Meander River's tidal "bore" aptly named today, in spite of a full moon (but at apogee) (SD,JS,JWW).

Sept 15 - again a "boring" bore, despite a super high tide at near-apogee for the moon (but great panorama from Tidal View Farm on St. Croix River (DW,JWW).

Algae/Seaweeds

May 20 - golden-brown patches of diatoms obvious in bright sun from Wolfville wharf (JWW).

June 28 - "stonewort" or "muskweed" (*Chara* - a green alga) abundant in Windsor gypsum-pond (JWW).

Summer - the "new" seaweed for N.S., "sea fleece" (*Codium fragile*, a potentially troublesome "weed" that can smother shellfish), has been in Chester Basin for at least a few years and is fairly common (MD).

Lichens/Fungi

May 24 - "water club" fungus growing on twigs in flowing stream at Lamb's Lake, Ann. Co. (JWW,FNSN).

Summer - "rare" lichen, *Evernia prunastri*, growing luxuriously near Cheverie, Brooklyn, and Gypsum Mines (KLC). Sept 5 - a plasmodium (flowing colony) of "scrambled egg slime"? on wood at Cape Split (BNS) (see Audubon Field Guide to Mushrooms). Several *Mutinus* stinkhorns

attracting flies at Cape Split (SW,BNS). Sept 12 - lots of sulfur shelf (chicken mushroom) on a very large stump (probably a Dutch elm disease victim) in Kentville (MG,TBH,JWW).

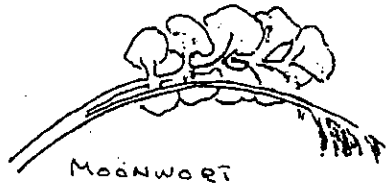
Sept 21 - a small colony of water mold on the back of a diving beetle (a slow one!) in Kentville Agricultural Centre lily-pond (JWW).

Sept 27 - several slimy yellowish boletes (*Suillus granulatus*) at Windsor gypsum-pond (JWW).

Oct 4 - almost no mushrooms in woods south of New Minas (drought continues) - a few coral fungi seen (BNS).

Vascular Plants

June 12-14 - moonwort ferns (tallest ones five cm!) with still-green sporangia among dunes at Conrad's Beach (RB,JWW).



May 20 - two clumps of lesser celandine (a buttercup) in roadside ditch in east Wolfville (JWW).

June 19 - two bunches of bird's-eye primroses, some in flower, on very precarious eroding edges of shore-turf, on Charlie's Loop Trail at Delaps Cove (GP).

June 28 - many showy lady's-slippers in bloom, others opening, in Smiley's Park (JWW,NSWFS).

Early July - many elms and maples in Wolfville show leafless top branches, on account of two years' seasonal droughts (SVK).

July 19 - *Daphne* bush with ripe, red, luscious-looking but poisonous berries on Wolfville Ridge (CBS,JWW).

July 21 - enlarged, galled fruits of

chokecherry full of orange larvae of gallmidges? in Wolfville (SD,JWW).

Late July - several plants of pointed-leaved tick trefoil still present along Gaspereau River (BLF,RRN) (see Newcomb's Wildflower Guide and Flora of Nova Scotia).

Aug 11 - lots of spreading "purple plague", i.e. purple loosestrife, near Maitland (Hants Co.); also some at South Maitland, Truro, and near Debert (JWW).

Sept 5-6 - a new form of Case's lady's-tresses orchid (very complicated!) found on Brier Island (BLF).

Sept 10 - on Acadia campus, the seed groups plus wings of linden trees doing their "helicopter act" (like maple seeds) in the wind - a strange dispersal mechanism (JWW).

Invertebrates

June 13 & 28 - many wolf spiders carrying egg-sacs on stony path adjacent to Smiley's Park (JWW).

June 25 - several small, pulsating lion's-man jellyfish seen from Wolfville wharf (JWW and Elderhostelers).

June 29 - an American dog tick found me southwest of Martock (JWW).

Summer - off Brier Island, lots of sea gooseberries and naked sea butterflies (pelagic snails) and whales feeding on latter (CH,BIOS).

Aug 1 - a draw-down of water in White Rock Canal revealed two kinds of mussels (*Anodonta implicata* and *Elliptio complanata* - identified by DD) and large colonies of freshwater sponge (JWW).

Aug 29 - at super low tide line on Noel Shore near Cheverie, a Polymastia sponge was covered with sediment except for waving hollow tentacles (TM, identified by JSB).

Sept 19 - under a carport in Wolfville, a black-and yellow garden spider made a large egg-sac and guarded it in cobwebs of a house spider, which very nearby had several egg-sacs and lots of newly hatched spiderlings (VE,JWW).

Sept 24 - at North Alton, a spider that loves to eat earwigs (description sounds like a funnel-web spider) (BR).

Insects

May 10 - foraging single bumblebees (queens?) in Wolfville (JWW).

May 21 - a large yellowjacket (green?) seen in Wolfville (JWW).

May 22 - a very large flying ant seen in Wolfville (JWW).

May 28 - one adult *Ishnura* damselfly at Kentville lily pond (JWW).

June - very few adult June beetles seen in Wolfville this year (BBT,JWW).

June 8 - an adult male giant water bug carrying eggs on its back at Kentville lily-pond (JWW). A large, dark silk moth flying at dusk at Robie Tufts Nature Centre in Wolfville (SD,BLF,JWW).

June 9 - a dragonfly emerging from larval case at edge of Kentville lily-pond (JWW) (probably *Epiptera canis*? (TBH)).

June 10 - solitary bees in Wolfville (first reported May 11) still active at burrows on lawn-edge (two kinds: a mining bee and a cuckoo bee) (latter still seen July 7) (JWW).

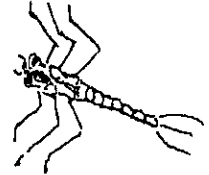
June 13 - a viceroy butterfly seen near Windsor (JWW). Lots of smallish blackfly larvae on rocks in Meander River at Smiley's Park (BNS).

June 19 - a polyphemus silk moth found on a Wolfville screen door (GT,BBT,JWW).

June 28 - some rocks covered with tiny baby mayflies? and/or stoneflies in Meander River at Smiley's Park (JWW).

July 21 - on leafless small poplars along Wolfville railroad track, lots of clusters of "hatching" pupal cases and newly emerged adult satin moths copulating and laying eggs (SD,JWW).

July 23 - small yellowjackets nesting in a swallow nest-box in Wolfville



DAMSELFLY

(BBT,JWW).

July 25 - two "greenheads" (salt-marsh deerflies) seen in Wolfville (JWW).

July 26 - reports from Grand Pre and Upper Dyke of a plague of houseflies and cluster flies (WE et al.).

Aug? - Clarence Stevens found a rhipiphorid beetle that is new to N.S., but his fellow workers threw it away - all members of this family of beetles are "parasitic" on other insects.

Aug 7 - two dog-day (or annual) cicadas calling in Canning (seem very late this year) (JWW). Webs and caterpillars of fall webworm seen at Canard Pond and Port Williams (JWW). A mating spiral/column of a dozen cabbage moths at Canning (dykeland) (JWW).

Sept 6 - two dozen large crane-flies inside my tent in Wolfville (probably the same species whose larvae, called "leatherjackets", damage lawns) (JWW).

Sept 22 - several oak woolly leaf-galls on red oak near Kingston (caused by a gall-wasp, *Andricus*) (GS).

Fish

June ? - seven ocean sunfish seen, including four together, in St. Margaret's Bay (fide CS).

No date - N.S. Museum received N.S.'s third record of a redeye gaper (a deep-water anglerfish) (SS).

Amphibians

May 23 - in Blomidon Provincial Park's pond in the woods, several calling American toads were jet black - one was captured and gradually changed colour to medium brown (BLF).

June 7 - a leopard frog calling at Saxon Road pond (southwest of Canning) (JWW, NSBS). Several green frogs calling with spring peepers at Kentville



LEOPARD FROG

and Coldbrook (JWW,NSBS),

July 23 - about 30 juvenile green froglets on lily-pads at Jack Scott's pond in Wolfville (JS,JWW). Aug 16-27 - spring peepers calling on Wolfville Ridge (JGT).

Reptiles

June 23 - a big snapping turtle (shell length 45 cm (18 in) crossing a road in Cheverie (KLC).

Early Aug - a green snake laid four eggs (no locality given) (NP).

Early Sept - some wood turtles seen near Bedford (CS).

Sept 9 & 10 - a leatherback sea turtle seen well offshore south of Cape Sable (CH,BIOS).

Mammals

May 21 - a red fox sleeping on a Grand Pre dykeland gravel road (BBT).



May 24 - same fox with two pups at a den in dykeland road-bank - remains

of muskrats, gull, and *Sorex* shrew at den (BBT,JWW).

June - a bobcat seen looking in window of a home on North Mountain near Lookoff (EBM).

June 10 - a silver fox seen at Avonport by Don MacIntosh (fide TM).

June 13 - a large seal (about 3 m long) on Blomidon beach (DJ,DP).

June 28 - at Church Point, a seal feeding very close to shore attracted a lot of attention for two weeks (CBC,CH).

July 13 - two pods of Atlantic white-sided dolphins, totaling about 120, gathered off Isle Madame, Cape Breton - several stranded - six died, others were rescued (CBC,ATV).

July 17 - a harbour porpoise was found dead in a herring gill-net, off Baxter's

Harbour (CHO).

July 20 - news report that hundreds of "whales" (probably mostly pilot whales?) being sighted near Cheticamp, Cape Breton (DL,CBC).

Aug 10 - two large skunks "pushing and nipping each other (very gently), like a pair of kids" - siblings? - on Long Island, Grand Pre (JGT).

Mid-Aug - a pod of 20 pilot whales at Brier Island - included two cow-calf pairs, calves very small - group was "piloted" in front by a huge bull (CH,BIOS).

Aug 20 - a large coyote in early a.m. in a field on Wolfville Ridge (JGT).

Sept 9-10 - on a BIOS research trip to Roseway Basin (60 km south of Cape Sable), about 40 right whales in courtship groups and 15 sei whales seen each day (CH).

Summer-Fall - for the entire 1992 season, about 80 individual humpback whales were documented off Brier Island (more than usual) (CH,BIOS).

Contributors to Trivial Tidbits

RB	Rick Ballard
JSB	Sherman Bleakney
CBC	CBC News
CKC	Cyril Coldwell
KLC	Karen Casselman
DD	Derek Davis
MD	Mike Dadswell
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VE	Vern Ellis
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MG	Merritt Gibson
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DJ	Dave Jones
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RBS	Liz & Richard Stern
NSWFS	N.S. Wild Flora Society
NSBS	Nova Scotia Bird Society
GT	Gerry Trueman
JT	Jean Timpa
MT	Miriam Tams
BBT	Brenda and Bill Thexton
JGT	Judy and Gordon Tufts
ATV	ATV News
DW	Don Wright & family
JWW	Jim Wolford

BNS Bird News

June 20 - September 20, 1992

by Richard Stern
Kentville, N.S.

This is a summary of interesting bird sightings recorded in our area during the summer of 1992. I have not included every bird seen by every observer, but have tried to include observations of unusual numbers, interesting behaviour, nesting, unusual species and observations that reflect the timing of migrations. I have restricted the area from which observations are reported mainly to Kings, Hants and Annapolis Counties, as this is the area of most interest to members of the BNS, and other areas are well covered by other publications. All sightings should be regarded as unverified observations unless stated otherwise. Comments about individual species are taken from a variety of sources, including range maps in various field guides, books such as Robie Tufts' Birds of Nova Scotia, etc., and the opinions of myself and my birding friends. I invite further comments, disagreements, etc.

Common Loon

June 28 and early July: a pair with one young, Lake George (RBS). Particularly nice to see in view of heavy recreational use of the lake by motorboats.

July 28, at least a dozen, mostly in basic plumage and therefore probably young pre-breeding birds, on the Annapolis River above Annapolis Royal (RBS). Same date, nine in a flock on Aylesford Lake (MT).

Pied-billed Grebe

June 23, one on New Minas Pond (JGT). A rare summer resident and breeder in our area.

American Bittern

BBT saw one of these quite widely distributed but shy and elusive, and therefore seldom seen, birds at the E. Grand Pre Dyke

on Sept 16.

Great Egret

In early August, one of these snowy white southern herons was seen by several observers in various places around the Habitant River (Canning Aboiteau, Kingsport Marsh, etc.) (MAG). It was still around on Aug 25 (AM). Although regular vagrants along the Atlantic Coast of Nova Scotia, I am not aware of previous sightings in Kings County. This species is abundant all along the Atlantic seaboard north to about Cape Cod, and post-breeding dispersal regularly occurs north of Cape Cod.

Snowy Egret

Aug 25-29, one at Harris's Pond, Canning (AM, BBT). The remarks concerning the preceding species also apply to this one, although the Snowy Egret is perhaps less rare than the Great Egret.

American Black Duck

Aug 6, 140 at Canard Pond (JGT). We should keep tabs on the numbers of this species since they are in decline. A major factor in the decline of the Black Duck is believed to be their being genetically "swamped" by interbreeding with Mallards whose continental population size (and hence gene pool) is orders of magnitude greater than that of the Black Duck.

Common Eider

Last days of June, 170 (estimate) off Wolfville Harbour (JGT). Flocks of these birds seem to gather there before flying down the Valley to St. Mary's Bay in the summer.

Common Merganser

Four nests at Methals and Black River Lakes (BLF) - three in nest boxes of which one had 14 Common and one Hooded Merganser eggs - all hatched.

Black Vulture

An individual of this rare vagrant to Nova Scotia was present during the first week of Sept in E. Margaretsville (FM and DJ). It was videotaped by DJ, and the video viewed

at the Sept BNS meeting, courtesy of Tom Herman. The bird seemed to favour one tree, and was also seen walking on the ground and eating a dead Raccoon. The distinguishing field marks were observed while the bird was on the ground and in flight. It appeared to gain strength and be less approachable as the days progressed, and at one point was seen to have a porcupine quill stuck to its face.

"Tufts" mentions just four previous provincial records of this species.

Osprey

July 1; a group of five over Lake George (presumably a family) (RBS). July 28 several birds hunting along the Annapolis River at Round Hill (RBS).

American Kestrel

BBT saw five to eight birds flying along the edge of the dyke at W. Grand Pre Aug 14. However AM noted that they were "very scarce" this year in the Valley, and I agree with him. Any other observations or thoughts?

shorebirds (*vide* JWW).

Mixed Shorebirds

This year the impression is that more birds are gathering at the Windsor causeway than previously, and possibly also at Porter's Point (JGT). Several observers have commented to me that numbers are down this year at Grand Pre, particularly in the sod fields at high tide.

July 30, mid-day high tide, Grand Pre. Usual vast flocks at this time of year - many thousands of Semipalmated Sandpiper, with smaller numbers of Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Short-billed Dowitcher and Sanderling (many of all species still in full breeding plumage - this is about the only chance we get to see that in the Sanderling). I find it next to impossible to estimate numbers while the flocks are continually moving, flying, wheeling and putting on their usual spectacular "show" (RBS). However, a breakdown of individual sightings and number "guesstimates" follows:

Killdeer

July 23; at least three groups (? families) flying over the dykes near Canard (RBS).

Semipalmated Plover

Estimated 475 at Grand Pre on Aug 4 (JGT), 355 on Aug 19 (AM).

Black-bellied Plover

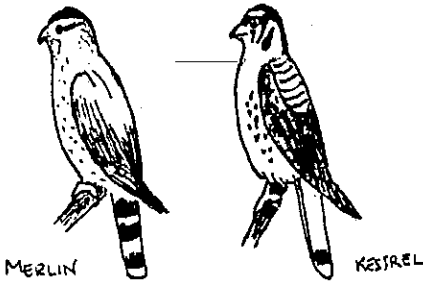
Estimated 300 at Grand Pre on Aug 4 (JGT).

Lesser Golden Plover

BBT saw 55 (a large flock for this species) at the W. Grand Pre Dyke Sep 16.

Hudsonian Godwit

Low maximum of just four birds reported this year, on Aug 4 at Grand Pre (JGT). AM saw an odd individual there on Sep 1 that had a barred tail and appeared buffy with a split eye-ring, and seemed small for the species, although the other field marks (wing bar, etc.) fit. This description does not fit any of the other possible Godwits (Bar-tailed, Black-tailed, etc.) but might fit an odd juvenile



Merlin

Aug 3; five recently fledged birds near the Biology Building at Acadia University, presumably a family (BLF). Just before that date, Merlins were reported to be flying around the Chimney Swift roost at dusk, but that Swifts were chasing the falcons rather than the other way round.

Peregrine Falcon

Early Aug, one adult around Starr's Point and one at Grand Pre, chasing

plumaged bird or a hybrid.

Whimbrel

Grand Pre - Aug 3, six (RBS), 17 on Aug 8 - a high number for this species (BBT), and seven on Aug 9(MH).

Willet

July 2, 38 at Wolfville Harbour, and by July 16-23, 16 22 (JGT).

Greater Yellowlegs

Thirty-five at Harris's Pond, Canning, Aug 2 - seems quite a large concentration. Short-billed Dowitcher

Numbers in Wolfville Harbour built up from 38 on July 16 to 78 on July 23, with an estimated 500 at Grand Pre on Aug 3 but only 12 there by Aug 18 (JGT). A flock of 200+ was present on the Windsor causeway earlier, on July 13 (BBT).

Pectoral Sandpiper

Usual one's and two's around (BBT, RBS, etc.).

Semipalmated Sandpiper

Estimated 8,000+ at Grand Pre on July 25, building to 120,000+ by Aug 10 and down to 50,000+ by Aug 12 (JGT). These numbers would be about normal for this location at this time in recent years.

Least Sandpiper

July 23; 100+ at Canard Pond, feeding on the extensive floating algae and vegetation "bloom" (RBS).

Stilt Sandpiper

Early Aug, two of these rather rare and elusive shorebirds were at Canard Pond,

moulting into basic (non breeding) plumage and still retaining a little rusty coloration around the auriculars (JGT, RBS).

Bonaparte's Gull

Sep 17, a first winter plumage bird at Canard Pond (RBS).

Ring-billed Gull

Aug 8, nine adults and one juvenile at Harris's Pond, Canning (MAG, JGT). While abundant on the South Shore, particularly in winter, this species is the least frequently seen of the more common gull species in the Valley.

Black Guillemot

Ten along Cape Split on July 25 (AM). They breed there, and it would be nice to keep up annual counts.

Barred Owl

AM saw a family behind the old BFM Hospital in Kentville on July 29. There were at least three hooting in unison from 4:00 till 5:30 a.m. (really!) behind my house close to that location on Aug 30, and my children "squeaked" two of them into the vicinity of the backyard two evenings later (RBS).

Of course, earlier in the summer, BLF had 15 successful nest boxes in the Wolfville/South Mountain area, building on his success from previous years. There were 43 eggs laid *in toto* and two clutches were predated. Thirty-two young were banded. One pair close to his house also had a propensity for loud hooting long into the night and late into the summer.

Common Nighthawk

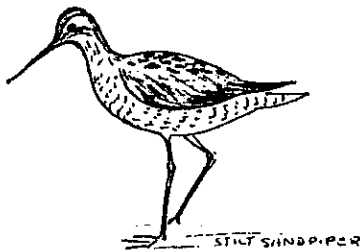
June 24; dusk, first bird seen this summer over Kentville, catching insects in the air (RBS).

July 19; three swooping very low over Aylesford Lake Road at dusk.

July 31; 12-15 over the Highway 101 near St. Croix (BBT) - presumably a migrating flock.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

RBS had plenty coming to his feeder all summer, although they were not as evident on cold wet days.



Pileated Woodpecker

Many reports of individual birds in wooded areas around Kings County (many observers). AM in particular had a male that would come to feed on egg shells at his compost heap (Lovett Road, Coldbrook) three or four times daily, later joined by a mate all through June. They kept flying across the Cornwallis River, presumably to a nest, and were not bothered by Angus's presence in the yard.

Downy Woodpecker

June 29; a pair feeding young in a nest hole in a dead poplar in our backyard, Kentville. They had previously been displaced from another nearby nest site by European Starlings (RBS).

Eastern Phoebe

Nest at White Rock with five eggs and another, also with five eggs at Gaspereau (BLF).

Great Crested Flycatcher

July 8, one at Tremont (WN). A relatively uncommon nester in the Valley and elsewhere in the province.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

July 11, nest with four young, in a small cavity on a vertical rock wall six feet above Curry Brook (BLF).

Cliff Swallow

A pair attempted to nest, unsuccessfully, on a house at Black River, as in previous years (with previous success!) (BLF).

Tree Swallow

All four boxes in the Thexton's yard unfortunately failed this summer:- one pair simply did not complete, one was taken over by a wasp's nest, one was full of black walnuts and the fourth had five young Squirrels (BBT).

Eastern Bluebird

First half of July; a pair successfully

bred in a Tree Swallow box near Gaspereau (BLF), representing the second known successful breeding of this species in the area this summer (the first was near Sheffield Mills in June). Unfortunately, the male was killed by a car, but the female continued to feed and successfully rear the young. Although nesting by small numbers of this species in the Valley is now almost regular, it would be nice to think that these were some of the eight over-wintering birds observed in the Canning area last winter.

Boreal Chickadee

June 23; a family of five at Blomidon Provincial Park (RBS).

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Hundreds on Cape Split July 25, presumably representing a migrant passage (AM).

Veery

June 29; a pair giving alarm "scold notes", Kentville Participark, evening (RBS). Presumably a nest or young were nearby.

As in the last few summers, I have noticed fewer and fewer thrushes and almost none on migration. Any comments?

Northern Mockingbird

BBT observed one singing in New Minas June 29.

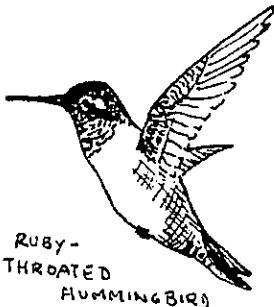
Cedar Waxwing

A nest containing four eggs was found on Aug 9 on Wolfville Ridge and on Aug 26 this nest contained four young (BLF). This species was present in large numbers around Lower Canard on Sept 15 (ETS).

Warblers

The general impression from my own and other birder's observations is that numbers are once again down.

A Palm Warbler's nest with four young was seen by BLF on June 27 at Butler Road. He also found a Canada Warbler's nest with



three eggs on July 15 at Sheffield Lake. Unfortunately a follow-up visit ten days later revealed three dead young found in the nest with no apparent injuries.

A wave of mixed species, including Northern Parula, Blackburnian and Black-throated Green was in Palmeto's sub division, Kentville, on the evening of Aug 15 (RBS). Another, including Black-throated Blue was on Wolfville Ridge on Aug 15 (GWT). A Canada Warbler was behind the Evergreen Nursing Home, Kentville on Aug 31 where Yellow rumped Warblers were in profusion on Sept 17 and Sept 20, on both occasions eating berries (RBS).

EU, of Avonport, reported to JWW the amazing sighting of a Swainson's (only one previous provincial record, from Sable Island) and a Hooded Warbler (a rare vagrant) in her yard in early Sept.

Northern Cardinal

Mid-June to July, a pair was present in New Minas (DM). Quite likely the pair nested although we have no proof. The same observer heard one singing near Sheffield Mills in late June. Up to now nesting in Nova Scotia of this spectacular species has been restricted to sporadic pairs in the extreme southwest of the province. However, the species is expanding its range, possibly aided by winter feeders, so we should continue to watch carefully!

Swamp Sparrow

BLF found a nest on July 16, at Methals Lake Bog, but it was later abandoned. There were 3+ with many Song and two Lincoln's Sparrows along the Cornwallis River in Kentville on Sept 16 (RBS).

Savannah Sparrow

Mid-July, abundant as usual in the grass, lanes and dykes of Grand Pre (RBS).

Common Grackle

Sep 1, BBT had a flock of 40 over their yard in Wolfville.

Brown-headed Cowbird

July 16; a fledgling being fed by a Solitary Vireo, Kentville (RBS). Of course

this is a parasitic species that lays its eggs in the host bird's nest, usually a Warbler or a Vireo, and when hatched, the chicks take over at the expense of the host eggs and family. Numbers are dramatically increasing at the expense of several of our native nesting songbirds.

Scarlet Tanager

This spectacular summer visitor retains a toehold in our area, with a male singing on Wolfville Ridge on July 6 (JGT), and a female/immature on Aug 9 and a male the next day in Palmeto's subdivision, Kentville (RBS), but no nests reported this year.

Pine Grosbeak

June 27, at Butler Road (BLF, GW, JGT).

Contributors to Bird News

BLF	Bernard Forsythe
MAG	Merritt Gibson
MH	Mike Hawkswood
DJ	Don Jameson
AM	Angus MacLean
DM	Doug Moore
FM	Fay Marshall
WN	Wayne Neily
ETS	Elizabeth Stern
RBS	Richard Stern
BBT	Brenda & Bill Thexton
GWT	Gordon Tufts
JGT	Judy Tufts
MT	Margie Tymchuck
EU	Eva Urban
JWW	Jim Wolford

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

<i>Information</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Home</i>
Rocks & Fossils	Geol. Dept., Acadia Univ.	542-2201	
Fish	N.S. Dept. of Natural Resources	679-6091	
Flora - General	Ruth Newell	542-2201	542-2095
Flora - Trees	Merritt Gibson	542-2201	582-7569
Flora - Fungi	Darryl Grund	542-2201	542-9214
	Nancy Nickerson	679-5333	542-9332
Flora - Lichens	Karen Casselman	424-7370	633-2837
Flora - Seaweeds	Darryl Grund	542-2201	542-9214
Flora - Mosses & Ferns	John Pickwell		681-8281
Birds - General	Bernard Forsythe		542-2427
	Richard Stern	678-4742	678-1975
	Gordon & Judy Tufts		542-7800
	Jim Wolford	542-2201	542-7650
	Jean Timpa		542-5678
Birds - Hawks & Owls	Bernard Forsythe		542-2427
	Cyril Coldwell	542-2201	542-2854
Birds - Falcons & Eagles	Peter Austin-Smith		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	Ellis Gertride		542-2816
& Archaeological Sites	James Legge		542-3530
Astronomy	Roy Bishop		542-3992
	Sherman Williams	542-3598	542-5104

BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY

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Members may also subscribe to *FNSN News*, the newsletter of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists; the subscription fee 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. B0P 1X0

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_____	Family	\$12.00	\$_____
_____	Individual Junior (less than 16 years old)	\$1.00	\$_____
_____	Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists Newsletters	\$5.00	\$_____
	Tax-deductible Donation		\$_____
		TOTAL	\$_____

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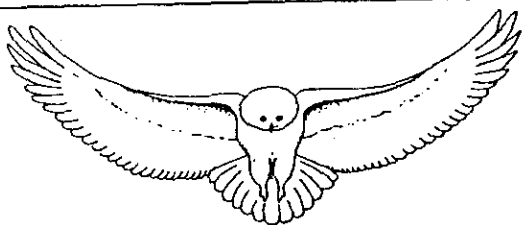
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BUSINESS NOTES

The Upside of the Downside of the Economy

It is a sad commentary that a significant advance in the movement to protect the world's natural resources has been due to the current downturn of the economy. In recent years, Kings County has been producing waste at a rate of some 50,000 tons per year, on par with national population averages. The good news is that last year's landfill use was down from this level. Unfortunately, however, this reduction, according to Kings Solid Waste Supervisor, Brian VanRooyen, resulted from the slow economy and not as a consequence of mobilizing our whole society to life-style changes.

Businesses Look at Recycling

The trend toward greater environmental consciousness is showing up in some recycling initiatives in the Wolfville business community. Several large corporate waste producers are presently investigating options for the composting and recycling of their own waste output.

Solid Waste Management

The Town is participating with the other Kings municipalities in the development of a Solid Waste Management Policy for Kings County. The scope of this initiative is wide, and includes investigation of wet/dry sorting options, centralized composting, appropriate use of tipping fees, and backyard composting. In our own community, Council is considering a residential backyard composting project, including talk of a worm box in Town Hall.

Workshop has Strong Appeal

Several presentations were made by David Slabotsky, Town Parks Foreman, to school students and citizen groups during Nova Scotia Waste Reduction Week. He reports that he was presently surprised at how keen the interest is in environmental issues, auguring well for the future.

