



# Blomidon Naturalists Society

Summer 1999 - Volume 26 Number 2

## **Blomidon Naturalists Society**

*"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).*

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## **BNS SPRING PROGRAMME, 1999 MONDAY EVENING MEETINGS**

**Sept 17. Ian Jones. Seabirds of Labrador and Alaska.** Ian has researched and photographed seabirds on both coasts of North America for over 10 years. His stunning photographs of Auks and Auklets will be coupled with a knowledgeable commentary by one of the world's foremost experts on these fascinating maritime birds. Beveridge Arts Center, 7:30 pm. **NOTE DATE CHANGE!!**

**October 18. Sherman Bleakney. History and Natural History of the local dykelands.** Sherman has not been idle! He has been compiling a series of photographs, anecdotes and fascinating pieces of natural history that he will weave together for us in what is sure to be an interesting night. Location to be announced in the next newsletter.

Field Trips. A joint field trip with the Nova Scotia Bird Society is planned for 18 September.

### **Editor's notes.**

This issue marks my debut as chair of the BNS Newsletter editorial board. I look forward to supporting the activities of the BNS in this way, and to being in contact with many more BNS members than I have met thus far in my new life in Nova Scotia.

The range and depth of contribution to this issue of the newsletter reflects an astonishing level of enthusiasm and energy; there can't be an insect, a bird or a mammal in West Central Nova Scotia that hasn't been sighted by at least one member of the BNS. You are truly compleat reporters.

I don't propose to be a new broom; nothing seems very wrong with the Newsletter. But as an editor/writer of some experience, I have my own quirks and preferences, and will employ them to clarify that which is a bit murky and tighten up loose and sometimes confusing reports. In short, I'll try to make the reader's job a bit easier and to help the editorial board continue to put out a newsletter that reflects the interests and adds to the knowledge of BNS members.

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**June 12/99 - Halifax Field Naturalists/Blomidon Naturalists  
Society Field Trip for Herptiles (Amphibians and Reptiles) in  
the Wolfville Area.**

**Jim Wolford.**

We met at the Nature Centre in Wolfville at 1 p.m. on a sunny, hot, but thankfully breezy day. About 15 people participated, mostly from the Halifax area. First I handed out several information sheets and talked a bit to promote the NOVA SCOTIA HERPETOFAUNAL ATLAS PROGRAM and encourage participation. The hand-outs included new versions of the Atlasser's Guide and atlassing cards for reporting; a Verbal Field Guide to CALLS of N.S. Frogs, Peepers, and Toads; descriptions of eggs and egg-masses of N.S. Amphibians; and line-drawings of pond creatures (insects and other invertebrates).

On a cassette-player I played the calls of all 8 N.S. frogs (6 species) + spring peeper + American toad.

Finally we started our caravan of cars at 1:35 p.m., and our first stop had nothing to do with herptiles. We drove a few blocks to Acadia's University Hall, to view with spotting scopes the **red-tailed hawk nest** just northwest of the building in a silver fir tree. In

the nest were 3 very large **near-fledglings**. We noted that extra food was lying in the nest, since one youngster was seen feeding itself. One adult flew in, possibly with more food, just as we were leaving.

We drove to the west from Gaspereau village, to Cyril & Ross Coldwell's houses, below which is a picturesque small pond full of flowering **scented water lilies**. After some difficult jockeying for viewing positions, we saw two calling male **green frogs** with bright yellow throats.

Our next stop was Waldon Coldwell's (no relation) hay-field on the Wolfville Ridge. A short walk got us to a spring-fed pond where 2 days earlier I had found fresh **eggs of green frogs**. In addition to that batch, we found 4 more floating rafts of very fresh-looking eggs of green frogs. (The floating raft is an adaptation for speeding up the development of the embryos to the hatchling tadpole stage. In Spring this would likely be detrimental, since the danger of frost at the surface would be high.) Several adult **green frogs** were seen well, and a

few people saw a half-grown **wood frog**, which was a big surprise to me. (They should all be in the woods now, except for this year's tadpoles, which will metamorphose next month).

Other items at the Ridge pond: several male **white-tailed skimmer dragonflies** cruising above the pond-surface, plus lots of other adult dragonflies and **damselflies**. With a dip-net + enamel pan + bucket I showed a few **tadpoles** of leopard frogs?, one small **larva of a yellow-spotted salamander** (I forgot to show the algae-laden, green, egg-envelopes of their hatched eggs, which I had seen 2 days before), adult **whirligig beetles**, 3 kinds of **beetle larvae**, adult **predaceous diving beetles**, adult **crawling water beetles**, oodles of **damselfly larvae** (of 2 sizes/kinds), **water boatmen**, **backswimmers**, 'water fleas' (tiny crustaceans like *Daphnia*), oodles of filamentous **green algae**. The first things we noticed when we arrived at the pond were lots of blooming emergent, well-named, **arrowhead** plants.

Back at the gate of the hay-field we found a **7-spot lady beetle**, which is an alien species and seems to be displacing our native species.

Next was a planned ice-cream-cone stop at Hennigar's Farm Market Pond to view the 2 kinds of turtles: Several **painted turtles** were easy to see (both basking and in the water), but only one of us saw the resident (but alien) adult **red-eared turtle**, which has been there at least a year and was probably someone's illegally released pet.

In late afternoon we drove to Lakeville's Silver Lake for our climax, **bullfrogs plus their 2nd-year tadpoles** (5-6 inches long, a few of which were into metamorphosis, with 2 pairs of limbs and a changed head-shape) at the western end of the lake. We saw 4 territorial adult male **bullfrogs** with bright yellow throats and large eardrums (tympanums), plus one half-grown subadult. One adult called while we were there. Since we didn't see 2 sizes of tadpoles, perhaps last summer was a reproductive bust, vs. the boom of 1997. Yes, bullfrog tadpoles do not metamorphose until they are 2 years old.

Also at Silver Lake **green frogs** were calling ('glunking'); one adult **double-crested cormorant** + lots of **red-winged blackbirds & grackles**; lots of small schooling **fishes** (**goldfish** were introduced a few years ago and are abundant, but none

were seen) + several colourful territorial **male 3-spined sticklebacks** (these were a surprise to me); lots of adult **dragonflies & damselflies** of several kinds, all actively patrolling, chasing, in tandem, and even copulating or

egg-laying on the wing; finally, single **mourning cloak & banded purple/white admiral butterflies**.

The group disbanded at about 6 p.m.

## Field Trip Report (for both NSBS & BNS)

April 25, 1999

### Joint N.S. Bird Society/Blomidon Naturalists Society Field Trip for Spring Birds in the Wolfville Area

by Jim Wolford, Wolfville

Ailing, I enlisted Judy Tufts to lead this trip. I recovered enough to attend, co-lead, and enjoy it myself. Our partly sunny day with a cold north breeze drew 13 participants.

Our route took us to the Wolfville Wharf, ne. Grand Pré/The Guzzle, Acadia's Univ. Hall, Greenwich, Canard Pond, Saxon St. Pond, Hennigar's Marsh (w. of Sheffield Mills), Harris' Pond/Habitant River/Aboiteau at Canning, and Van Nostrand's Pond (Starr's Point).

Waterfowl seen included single red-throated & common loons, double-crested cormorants, great blue herons, both nesting and migrant, Canada geese. Among 150 of latter was one with a white plastic neck-collar. Judy saw and read

several collars there at Canning this Spring), green-winged teal, mallards, black ducks, blue-winged teal, ring-necked ducks, and a red-breasted merganser.

At Greenwich the huge bald eagle nest had an adult sitting quite high, and there may have been tiny eaglets present. At Acadia's University Hall, the pair of red-tailed hawks nesting for the third year built in a planted fir tree just nw. of the building this year. While viewing the nest, we got lucky, since the male? flew in with a small mammal (vole or big shrew). Both adults stood on the nest, showed their red tails, then the female? flew off with the mammal, leaving the male? to settle down and take a turn on the eggs? -- incubation began about March 25. While there we also saw a calling merlin and 10 cedar waxwings.

Elsewhere we saw killdeer, pheasant, tree swallows, grackles & red-wings in the cattails, single yellow-rumped & palm warblers, a late tree

sparrow, plus muskrats, and we heard the long snore-call of a leopard frog. Judy's bird-list had 38 species, while I had 34.

June 5/99 -

I led a '**Parks Are For People**' nature walk in Blomidon Provincial Park. About 20 people from Truro, Middleton, Kentville, & elsewhere joined me, and we caravanned in our cars up to the northeast corner of the campground, where we started our 2-hour excursion along the Joudrey Trail.

The **wild leeks** now are much less obvious than 3 weeks ago. Now the forest floor has greened up much more, and the leeks' leaves are lying flat and are very pale. Plants in bloom included **mountain maples**, **starflower**, **wild lily-of-the-valley**

(I refuse to name this species 'false'!), **dewberry** (some in young fruit now), **clintonia**, **wild Solomon's-seal** (some now past flowering), **false (!) Solomon's-seal**.

There were only a few pesky **mosquitoes**, and birds heard or seen included **robins**, **black-throated green warbler**, **ovenbirds**, **black-and-white warbler**, **black-capped chickadee**, **blue-headed (solitary) vireo**.

The large **temporary pond**, in this second Spring of drought (after a very dry Winter, too), is already reduced to about 3 separate small areas of water. The rest of the pond is now impressive beds of sensitive fern, royal fern, and ?cinnamon fern. The one pond we examined (with dip-net and enamel pan on a bucket) held quite a few adult **fairy shrimp** still. The species is *Eubranchipus intricatus*, and some of you will recall that until recently this was the only habitat in N.S. for fairy shrimp; recently I confirmed a second pond, near Berwick, and a tentative look of them indicates they may be the same species. The fairy shrimp have already laid their eggs and will soon die, leaving the very resistant eggs to dry and freeze over Winter and then hatch when flooded, hopefully next Spring.

Other animals in the pond included oodles of **tadpoles** of two sizes: largish ones were probably of **wood frogs**, and small ones might be peepers (or leopard frogs), larvae of **caddisflies** in their cases made from pieces of vegetation;

adult **whirligig** beetles; small adult **predaceous diving** beetles; **larvae of phantom midges**; active **pupae** of some kind of dipteran (**fly**); one **planarian flatworm**, one **snail**.

We continued walking past the pond for just a few minutes, to

the first trail viewpoint, from which we could see Five Islands Provincial Park. Then we turned around and returned to our cars. Back in the campground, a **mourning cloak** butterfly repeatedly chased a **tiger swallowtail** (one of several present).

### **Spring '99 - North American Migration Count - N.S. by Judy Tufts.**

The Spring Count for NAMC '99 was a great success. I wish to thank all participants for your time, energy and dedication. Special thanks go to area/ reps and county-coordinators for their extra contribution. The final results of the count reflect the efforts of many people and are clear evidence of the enthusiasm and dedication of birders to this worthwhile project.

For once we enjoyed pleasant warm and mostly sunny weather. Temperatures ranged from lows of 8-10 degrees C. to highs of 18-24 degrees C --

weren't we lucky! Obviously, between the fine weather on the count day and the realization that quite a few migrants were arriving earlier than usual, the potential for a great count was out there. And so it was. When I compared the '99 count results for the total province with those from the '98 count, the difference was immediately apparent. While we gained three extra species for the province in '99 we added almost 13000 new birds to the previous year's total ! Yes, that figure is right! The milder winter and the early warm spring played a great part in this bounty of birds.

### **Highlights**

A mixed 'kettle' of birds of prey observed over Brier Is. included 12 Turkey Vultures, 8 Sharp-shinned, and single Cooper's, Red-tailed and Broad-winged, hawks. Then

there were the 250 Bufflehead in the Belleisle Marsh area, Anna Co. On Cape Sable Is., Shelburne Co. - which often yields unexpected treasures - not only were there many



shorebirds -12 species - but the rare American Oystercatcher pair had returned early, 805 Brant lingered and a local fisherman counted 200 Red Phalaropes, a skua sp., a Parasitic Jaeger and 3 Northern Fulmar from his boat! At the opposite end of the province in Victoria Co., boat trips produced 200 Razorbills and 200 American Puffins, but maybe the most unusual observation in Cape Breton came from the Mira River ! An immature Brown Pelican was found sitting on a log in shallow water - possibly the same bird seen around Shelburne Co. earlier this spring . Other notable sightings include a Snowy Egret (Lun.- there seems to be one each spring in the provincial count), Peregrine Falcon (Vict. - they also recorded American Kestrel and Merlin), Virginia Rail (Pictou -2nd yr in a row), an American Coot in APBS (Cumb), one 'first-year' Lesser Black Backed Gull (Kings), a Bicknell's Thrush (Halifax), an Eastern Towhee (Yarm.), while C.B. Co. recorded a high of 72 Common Loons!

### **Observations in Annapolis, Hants and Kings counties**

60 Brant were recorded near Wolfville, and 124 Canada Geese in Hants, the largest concentration in a single county. Annapolis Co. offered 20 Horned Grebes, 20 Great

Cormorants, 2 Lesser Scaup and one Piping Plover! Common Snipe and Ring-necked Pheasant were abundant in both Hants and Kings. 2 Bobwhites, probable escapees, were found around Berwick.

The Barred Owl numbers prove that this species is very much 'alive and well' in Kings Co., thanks to in large part to Bernard Forsythe's efforts in providing nest boxes. A fantastic count of 60 owls were registered for the count! Harry Brennan's equally magnificent efforts in Pictou Co. support the owl cause in his area, especially with little Saw-whets. 2 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were recorded in Hants and one was found in Kentville.

Members of the woodpecker family were abundant around the province, particularly Northern Flickers: Hants (267) and Kings (184), and Downy Woodpeckers in Kings (94). Three times as many Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen/heard in the province with a mini-invasion of 45 in Hants Co alone. Cliff Swallows were just beginning to appear through Annapolis. Co. Large flocks of American Robins in Hants (1141), and Kings (811) were impressive too. 8 Catbirds were counted in Annapolis (12 for the whole

province), while Kings enjoyed 11 Northern Mockingbirds. This was not unexpected as they seemed to have taken a distinct liking to Kentville/Wolfville area. A pair of Cardinals rounded out the exotic birds in our area. It was interesting to note that while Kings had an abundance of Song Sparrows (783) vs. Hants (413), Hants reported almost twice as many (414) White Throated Sparrows as did Kings. Finally, higher concentrations of members of the Finch family - Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch and Evening Grosbeak occurred in Hants and Kings counties, compared to the rest of the province, with almost 1000 goldfinches tallied in Kings and over 600 in Hants!! House Sparrows numbers were very high here as well.

On the basis of all these observations one has to consider whether the mild winter weather had an influence on the number of birds for this year's count. Did more birds remain in this province surviving as a result of the more 'open' winter? Did the 'early' warm spring affect the migration movement, setting it in motion almost two weeks earlier than usual? Was this trend widespread throughout this continent? Obviously it was not just

restricted to migrating land birds - larger flocks of Northern Gannets and Greater Cormorants were noted and Black Ducks were more plentiful than in previous years. Looking at the trend throughout Nova Scotia however, I noted that although American Goldfinches had bonanza-sized flocks (60 % increase over last year), many species such as Common Snipe, Mourning Doves, woodpeckers, Blue Jays, both Chickadee species, Wrens, Kinglets, Thrushes, Song and White Throated sparrows, Crossbills and Pine Siskins, also registered 30 - 45% increases over last year's figures. Yellow-rumped Warblers (Myrtle) were down about 15%, but Pine Warblers were almost double the '98 tally.

The accumulated data is very revealing. Most of the species showed up in greater numbers in '99 which is not surprising since after all we had to account for those extra 13000 birds somewhere. What a satisfying Spring Count for this province!

Thank you all, each and every one of you who helped to reveal, in numbers, that we are experiencing an extraordinary birding year.

Judy Tufts

NS Coordinator for NAMC

## TRIVIAL TIDBITS of Nova Scotia Natural History

compiled by Jim Wolford

Site 1, Comp. 61, RR3

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early April through June 1999

### TIDES/SKIES

Apr. 16-17 - over N. Mtn. & Blomidon, **aurora borealis** seen: "glowing, wavering curtains" & shafts of light were **s p e c t a c u l a r** (LB, RB, MP, JGT, JT).

Apr. 21 - clear view of **Mars** over South Mountain, from near Greenwood (SH).

May 6-7 - 3 a.m. at Avonport - a hazy, circular arch glowing in the northwest, was a single fuzzy band of ghostly white light -- this was a "**moonbow**", not to be confused with a "ring around the Moon" (SW).

May 8 - 2 elongate & colourful **Sundogs or parhelions**, one on each side of the late-afternoon Sun, seen from Greenwich (PM, JW).

May 16 - **very high tide breached the dyke** on the Horton Bluff Rd. (Wharf Rd.) & flooded marshland & farm-fields (JGT).

May 17 - SW ended his show-&-tell-with-computer on

skies/stars/planets by running us outside Beveridge Arts Centre, Wolfville, just in time to view the high & bright passing of the **MIR Space Station**, plus **Venus + new Crescent Moon** (west), plus **Mars** (southeast)(BNS *et al.*).

June 16 - in early evening, at Evangeline Beach, 2 colourful **Sundogs or parhelions** visible, one on either side of the Sun (PM, JW).

### FUNGI

May 23 - a **false morel** found in woods at White Rock (JW).

### NON-FLOWERING PLANTS

Apr. 20 - sporangia-bearing shoots of **horsetails** up and shedding spores along road w. of Canning (JW).

Apr. 25 - **scouring rush** (*Equisetum hyemale*) seen near the Canning Aboiteau, & **field horsetail** (*E. arvense*) at Saxon St. Pond (SH).

May 8-9 - near Antigonish,

ostrich fern fiddleheads much earlier than expected for the 2nd year in a row. They are over a foot tall now (RBa).

May 15 - ground pine or tree club-moss seen in Kejimikujik Nat. Park (SH).

May 18 - at White Rock, lots of cones of white pine & hemlock on the ground -- remnants of last-year's bumper-crop of cones of spruces & other conifers (JW).

## FLOWERING PLANTS

Sheila Hulford sent in the following reports of flowering dates, mostly near Greenwood: purple crocuses Apr. 2; c. dandelion Apr. 9-22; coltsfoot Apr. 25; shadbush (downy serviceberry), wild strawberry May 3; stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*) May 4; "Timothy" (prob. meadow foxtail, *Alopecurus*), sheep sorrel May 5, shepherd's purse, c. periwinkle May 6, rhodora, dwarf huckleberry, toothwort, cuckoo flower, & wild lily-of-the-valley May 9; painted trillium, goldthread, clintonia or blue-bead lily May 15; garden lupines may 22; hop clover, blue-eyed grass, lesser stitchwort May 26; king devil or field hawkweed, mouse-ear hawkweed, common buttercup May 29; musk

mallow June 18; devil's paintbrush or orange hawkweed, blackberry, ragged robin, larger blue flag June 3; yellow goatsbeard, dame's rocket June 4; bird's-foot trefoil, yellow rattle June 8; celandine, evening lychnis June 9; rough-fruited cinquefoil June 11; English plantain June 14; St. John's-wort June 15; rabbit's-foot clover, yellow sweet clover, n. bush-honeysuckle, meadowsweet (*Spiraea*), tall meadow rue, "bullhead lily"? (cow lily? or yellow pond-lily?) June 21; Queen-Anne's-lace, c. evening primrose June 22; and Indian tobacco June 25.

Apr. 1 - Daphne and hazelnut flowers open in Wolfville, adjacent to Acadia Biology greenhouse (JW).

Apr. 2 - catkins of alder and trembling aspen open in Wolfville (JW).

Apr. 5 - one red maple tree in Wolfville has a few open flowers and many more nearly so (JW).

Apr. 6 - several common dandelions finally in bloom in Wolfville (WL).

Apr. 12 - bloodroot in bloom along Meander River, Hants Co. -- 3 weeks early (CMu).

- Apr. 22 - **trailing arbutus** or **Mayflower** and lots of **coltsfoot** blooming at White Rock (JW).
- Apr. 23 - **fly-honeysuckle** flowering adjacent to Acadia U. Greenhouse, & **bigtooth aspen/poplar** catkins open in Wolfville (JW).
- May 2 - **sugar maple** in bloom in Wolfville (JW).
- May 2 - still lots of blooming **bloodroot**, & **nodding trilliums** almost in flower, along Meander River near Brooklyn, Hants Co.(PC,ED).
- May 3 - **Norway maple** flowering in Wolfville (JW).
- May 4 - **leatherleaf** in bloom near Halifax, & **yellow violets** already flowering in Smiley's Prov. Park (NH).
- May 5 - **serviceberry** or **shadbush** in bloom very early; **lowbush blueberry** just starting to bloom; **white birch** catkins open; also pink-flowered **magnolias** now at their best in Wolfville (JW).
- May 6 - in Wolfville, **pin cherry** or **bird cherry** in bloom (JW).
- May 7 - in bloom in Wolfville were **strawberry**, **pussy-toes**, **Canada plum** (*Prunus nigra*), **"plum"** (*P. domestica*), **northern blue violet** (formerly *Viola septentrionalis*, now *V. sororia*), & **hawthorn** (almost)(JW).
- May 7 - one **red trillium** in bloom at Mt. St. Vincent Univ., Bedford (BM).
- May 8 - in the Black River area, oodles of blooming **trout lilies** plus a few **purple trilliums** (**trillia?**)(RN).
- May 8 - lots of **ground ivy** in bloom in several areas of King's Co. (JW).
- May 8-9 - at Port Hilford, Guys. Co., in bloom were **starflower**, **strawberry**, **purple? violet**, **bluets**, **Mayflower/trailing arbutus** --the Mayflowers were at Lochiel Lake near Aspen (RBa).
- May 9 - **trout lilies** & **bloodroot** in bloom everywhere in some Pictou Co. woods (MB).
- May 10 - Intervale plants, Middle River, Pictou Co.: **bloodroot** & **trout lily** flowers on the wane, **sessile bellwort** in bloom, several species of **violets** flowering (esp. **smooth? yellow violets**), **nodding trilliums** almost in bloom (KM).
- May 13 - one **dwarf ginseng**

plant found in bloom in Linacy area, Pictou Co. (KM).

May 13 - **aspen poplars** shedding cottony seeds in Wolfville (JW).

May 14 - **barberry** starting to bloom in Wolfville, **yellow rocket** flowering at Falmouth & **red elderberry** at Halifax (JW).

May 14 - at Murphy Lake, King's Co., **painted trillium**, **rose twisted-stalk**, & **bluet** flowering (MT).

May 15 - **toothwort** & a few **nodding trilliums** blooming in Pictou Co. (KM).

May 15 - along Meander River near Smiley's Prov. Park, a very large plant of **red baneberry** in bloom, plus 4 species of **violets** (*Viola blanda*, *V. conspersa*, *V. cucullata*, *V. pubescens* -- hundred of latter **yellow violets**)(CMu,NSWFS).

May 15 - lots of **cuckoo-flowers**, one **lilac** in bloom, & **apple** plus **horse-chestnut** flowers just starting in eastern Annapolis Valley (JW).

May 15 - in Blomidon Prov. Park, lots of blooming **red trilliums** -- other flowers noted were **red-berried baneberry**, **blue violets**, **dewberry**, **rosy**

**twisted-stalk**, **wild Solomon's-seal**, **false Solomon's-seal**, **fly-honeysuckle**, **spring beauty**, **alder**, **gooseberry**, **skunk currant** -- **fiddleheads** of ostrich fern up to half a metre tall -- & **red elderberry** in bloom on Valley floor (NSNT,RN,JW).

May 16 - in Blomidon Prov. Park, **hobblebush** & **trout lilies** flowering (JW).

May 16 - at Cape Split, oodles of blooming **spring beauties**, lots of **red/purple trilliums** and **rose twisted-stalk**, and **Dutchman's-breeches** all finished with flowering already (CMu).

May 17 - **painted trillium** flowers in Dartmouth (PR), and **red oak** catkins open in Wolfville (JW).

May 18 - **chokecherry** & **ironwood** or **hop-hornbeam** & **garden lupine** in bloom, and new leaves of **poison ivy** well up, w. of Gaspereau (JW).

May 20 - in bloom in Wolfville: **mountain-ash**, **sycamore maple**, and a species of **spurrey** (JW).

May 20 - in Hopewell area, Pictou Co., in bloom were **wild lily-of-the-valley**, **painted trillium**, **Clintonia**, **starflower**, **goldthread**, &

shepherd's purse (KM *et al.* ).

May 21 - **rhodora** in bloom near Halifax Airport (PM,JW).

May 23 - at White Rock, **starflowers**, a **pink lady's-slipper**, **painted trilliums**, **blue violets**, **bunchberry**, **wild lily-of-the-valley**, **wild sarsaparilla**, **red-berried baneberry** in bloom (JW).

May 23 - **red-seeded dandelion** and **bulbous buttercup** in bloom in Keji' Adjunct Nat. Park, near Port Joli (RN).

May 27 - at Poplar Grove, **ram's-head lady's-slippers** in bloom and more abundant than we recall seeing there -- also flowering were **yellow lady's-slippers** (early), tiny **forget-me-nots**, **blue-eyed grass** (FL,RN,JW).

June 1 - 2 species of **hawkweeds** flowering at New Minas (JW).

June 2 - in Wolfville, **highbush cranberry**, **blackberry**, and, in gardens, **rhododendrons & laburnum** or **golden-chain trees** in bloom (JW).

June 4 - in Wolfville, **buttercups** in bloom and **big-toothed aspens/poplars** shedding "cotton" (seeds)(JW).

June 5 - **dame's-rocket** flowering s. of Canning; in Blomidon Prov. Park, **mountain maple**, **starflower**, **Clintonia**, **wild Solomon's-seal**, & "false" **Solomon's-seal** in bloom (JW).

June 6 - **oxeye daisies** in bloom along riverbank at White Rock (PM,JW).

June 7 - in Wolfville, both local species of **buckthorn** flowering; and "acacia" or **black locust** in bloom at New Minas (JW).

June 8 - **hedge bindweed & bird's-foot trefoil** flowering at Belleisle, Ann. Co. (JW).

June 9 - **poison ivy** in bloom on the dam of Gaspereau Lake (hwy. 12)(JT,JGT,JW).

June 10 - **bush-honeysuckle** starting to bloom in Kentville (JW).

June 9 - in bloom at Sherbrooke Lake Camp were **moccasin-flowers**, **sheep laurel** or **lambkill**, and almost **witherod** or **wild raisin** (JW).

June 11 - at New Minas, **yellow irises**, **red osier dogwood**, **bush-honeysuckle**, and **wild roses** in flower; at Lakeville, in bloom were **white water crowfoot** and **yellow**

pond-lilies or cow lilies (JW).

June 12 - **scented water-lilies** flowering at Gaspereau, and **arrowhead** along Wolfville Ridge (HFN,JW).

June 12 - **chokeberry, pale laurel**, and one remaining **rhodora** in bloom in Bonnet Lake Barrens Wilderness Area, Guys. Co. (RL,EMFN).

June 13 - **pitcher-plant & twinflower** in bloom in Maple Lake area, Pictou Co. (MB,KM).

June 13 - an **arethusa orchid** in bloom only 2 feet from an ATV-caused mudhole, near White Hill, Pictou Co. (MB).

June 13 - about 30 **large yellow lady's-slippers** in full bloom, near James River, Antig. Co., in gypsum-karst topography, plus one **early coral-root orchid** also in bloom (RBa,MG,RL).

June 17 - in Wolfville, **musk mallow, multiflora rose, tulip tree** (planted), and **goutweed** or **Bishop's weed** (*Aegopodium*) -- latter is a very invasive garden pest which is spreading rapidly along Gaspereau Ave. (JW).

June 17 - **Indian cucumber-root** in bloom at Sand Lake on North Mtn., Ann. Co. (TN).

June 24 - both species of **sweet clovers** are in bloom together along Valley roadsides -- usually the **white** species precedes the **yellow** by weeks, and the latter is very early this year -- suggests different **cues** for flowering in the 2 species? (FS).

June 24 - **rattlesnake-plantain orchids** (leaves only) found in Pictou Co. -- species yet to be confirmed (MB,KM,FM).

June 26 - **Scotch broom** in bloom e. of Shelburne, **ragged robin** abundant & in bloom near Barrington, Shelburne Co. (JW).

June 27 - lots of **common wood sorrel**, and 2 locales for **Indian pipe**, at a lake in Liscomb Game Sanctuary (MB).

## INVERTEBRATES

Apr. 23 - thousands of living **sea gooseberries** (**comb-jellies**)(*Pleurobrachia*) in the water at the Dartmouth ferry terminal (TB).

May 15 - oodles of full-grown **FAIRY SHRIMP** (*Eubranchipus intricatus*), just beginning to carry egg-sacs, in the temporary pond along the Cliff Trail in Blomidon Prov. Park -- **ALSO, AT SOMERSET**, I confirmed the



finding 2 Springs ago (1197) of **FAIRY SHRIMP** by 2 students of George Forsyth in a temporary pond north of the Somerset School -- quite possibly the same species as at Blomidon (JW).

May 17 - **extreme low tide** at Kingsport/Longspell Pt. revealed: wall-to-wall **razor clams**, big **moon snails** eating those clams & laying eggs in large **sand-collars**, 5 species of **sea slugs**, a variety of exposed **sponges & small hydroids** -- the **bottom** has **changed** greatly from several years ago, with new "megaripples" of sand, **surf clams/bar clams & quahogs**, & **not** the formerly extremely abundant **tube-dwelling polychaete worms** (*Sabellaria*) (SB).

## ARACHNIDS

April - "**ticks**" reported to be about 3 weeks early in Yarmouth Co. (*vide* HDr).

mid Apr. - a couple "**ticks**" found on a dog on Wolfville Ridge (*vide* JGT).

mid Apr. - lots of "**ticks**" found while/after birding in Shelburne & Yarmouth Counties (MN).

Apr. 23 & May 4 - "**ticks**" found on observer after work in woods, near Greenwood (SH).

Apr. 26 - one **American dog tick** found on me during walk along Acadia Univ.'s Nature Trail, Wolfville (JW).

Apr. 27 - Announcement by Health Canada of a new injectable **vaccine for Lyme disease**. This bacterial disease is transmitted by **deer ticks**, which so far does not seem to complete its life-cycle in N.S. (JW)

May 8 - oodles of small formless **cobwebs** (in spherical or ovoid shapes) on Grand Pre lawns. From some kind of **spider?**(JW).

May 11 - a very attractive **jumping spider** called the "audacious jumper" (*Phidippus audax*) found on a hay bale at Windsor (*vide* DR).

May 18 - a **dog tick** found on a human shoulder at Blomidon (AW).

May 20 and 31 - **American dog ticks** encountered at Black River Lake & in Wolfville, respectively (JH).

June 1 - one **Am. dog tick** found on myself at Belleisle Marsh, Ann. Co. (JW).

June 16 - a few **Am. dog ticks** still being found at Sherbrooke Lake (JW).

**I N S E C T S** -  
**Collembola/Ephemeroptera/  
Plecoptera/Orthoptera/Homo  
ptera**

Apr. 7 - both "snowfleas"  
(springtails) and winter  
stoneflies seen in deep snow  
along various brooks in Cape  
Breton Highlands Nat. Park  
(RL).

May 5 - an adult mayfly seen  
at Kingston (SH).

June 23 - near Port Lorne, Ann.  
Co., lots of short-horned  
grasshoppers  
hopping/walking/flying  
erratically through a meadow  
(TN).

June 24 - a probable cicada  
calling during hottest part of  
day, near Greenwood (SH).

**INSECTS - Odonata**

Apr. 23 - lots of larvae seen in  
a little bog in Hants Co.: Am.  
Emerald, Chalk-fronted  
Corporal, Lake Darner,  
Eastern Forktail, Swamp  
Spreadwing, & Northern  
Bluet ("scientific names" can  
be provided on request) -- also  
one adult "water scorpion"  
(Hemiptera) seen (MH,AK).

May 7 - at Harris' Pond  
(Canning) & Canard Pond,  
emergences of mostly female  
and mostly male, resp., Eastern  
Forktail damselflies (*Ischnura*

*verticalis*) (MH,AK).

May 15 - at Wallace Bay  
(Northumberland Shore), a  
skimmer and a slim darner?  
(dragonflies) and a damselfly  
(PR).

June 9 - one lovely adult  
"ebony jewelwing" damselfly  
(*Calopteryx maculata*) seen in  
woods near a stream at  
Sherbrooke Lake Camp (JW).

June 24 - 12 "ebony  
jewelwing" damselflies at  
McGee Lake near Coldbrook,  
plus lots of bluet damselflies  
(*Enallagma*) (AM).

**I N S E C T S** -  
**Neuroptera/Megaloptera**

June 9 - a dying adult fishfly  
(*Nigronia*) found along stream  
at Sherbrooke Lake Camp  
(JW).

**INSECTS - Coleoptera**

Apr. 22 - 35 unidentified lady  
beetles (prob. southern?)  
were all over hanging washed  
clothes in a Wolfville yard  
(DT).

Apr. 30 - a large ground  
beetle (*Calosoma*), sometimes  
called "caterpillar hunter",  
active in evening in Wolfville  
(JW).

May 1 - a 2-spot lady beetle --  
so nice to see a native species

these days! -- and a few "lightningbugs" or "fireflies" seen in Wolfville -- the latter are the most common Valley species, which has **no light organ** and thus cannot light up! (JW).

May 2 - a **7-spot lady beetle** found along dyke at Hortonville (PM,JW).

May 4 - a pretty metallic tan **chrysomelid beetle** with blackish markings landed on shirt of observer at Canning (IP) -- looks like pictures of **dogwood** or **willow Calligrapha** species in JW's books.

May 4 - in a pond along Sherwood Ravine Trail in Wolfville, 2 kinds/sizes of adult **whirligig beetles** (+ a few adult **backswimmers** (Hemiptera))(JW).

May 14 - one **June beetle** seen near Greenwood (SH).

May 16 - adult **June beetles** very early at Avonport & Hantsport & Wolfville (RB,MFu,JT).

June 5 - **fireflies/lightningbugs** (beetles, Lampyridae) seen at Glenholme (w. of Truro)(TB) and at Whitehill, Pictou Co. (MB).

early June - **fireflies** 3 weeks

early in Hants Co. (PS).

June 9 - a large larva ("water tiger") of a **predaceous diving beetle** bit me quite painfully! when I showed it to a bunch of 6th-graders, at Sherbrooke Lake Camp (JW).

June 11 - along New Minas RR, a metallic-green **tiger beetle** and a **7-spot lady beetle** (latter on a milkweed); at Port Williams, lots of bronze-coloured **tiger beetles** on ground in a sand-quarry (JW).

June 12 - along Wolfville Ridge at the edge of a hay-field, one **7-spot lady beetle** found (good luck?)(HFN,JW).

June 16 - a late, living **June beetle** found in my car at Sherbrooke Lake (JW).

June 21 - several adult **14-spot lady beetles** found in a Wolfville garden (JT).

## INSECTS - Lepidoptera

Apr. 17 - see entry under **bat & moth** (DT).

Apr. 17 - 2 **mourning cloak** butterflies seen at Hartlen's Point, Dartmouth (PMa).

Apr. 18 - a **cabbage white** butterfly seen in Wolfville (JT).

Apr. 19 - in Bedford, on a stone wall below some fruit trees, was a **caterpillar**: 2-3 cm. long, black body with a couple of narrow yellow stripes running length of body, with tufts of rusty orange hairs tipped with black (PC).

Apr. 23 - a **hop merchant or eastern comma butterfly** at North Alton (MH,AK).

May 1 - a **Spring azure** (a blue butterfly) seen at Bedford (*fide* PC).

May 2 - **cabbage white, Milbert's tortoiseshell, & Compton tortoiseshell** seen in The Valley (MH).

May 2 - a **Milbert's tortoiseshell & a mourning cloak** seen at Uniacke Estate Museum Park -- latter seemed to be feeding on emerging buds of yellow birch? (PC,ED).

May 3 - a **cabbage white** seen in Halifax (PC).

May 7 - a **mourning cloak** butterfly seen in Wolfville (JW).

May 8,11 - **clouded sulphur** butterflies seen at Brier Is., Coldbrook (AM).

May 12 - a **mourning cloak** butterfly at Kentville (AM).

May 13 - someone reported a very early **luna moth** at Waverley to the N.S.Museum (*fide* CF).

May 15 - 2 **mourning cloaks** & 3 **blues** (butterflies) seen in Blomidon Prov. Park (JW).

May 19 - a **cocoon of a cecropia moth**, collected in winter, **attracted** an adult **male**, which then coupled with the newly emerged **female!**, at Doctor's Light near Yarmouth (BDe)(presumably the soon-to-emerge female emitted **pheromones** (sex attractants)).

May 20 - a **tiger swallowtail** seen at Bayer's Lake Industrial Park, Halifax (LPP).

May 22 - a **monarch** butterfly seen in Halifax (CM).

May 22-23 - good numbers of flying **clouded sulphurs**, & single **ringlet** butterflies (*Coenonympha tullia*) seen at Bear River (JT).

May 23 - a **spring azure** butterfly seen at Bear River (JT).

May 26 - a **tiger swallowtail** drinking at **lilac** flowers near Greenwood (SH).

May 27-28 - 2 **monarchs** seen on Grand Manan Island (BD).

May 29 - a dozen **tiger**

**swallowtails** clustered together on the ground at Harris Lake, Lun. Co. (DM)(probably feeding on something "gross", guesses JT).

May 29 - a **Hobomok skipper** seen at Wolfville (JT).

May 30 - 2 probable **monarchs** seen at The Ovens (MF).

May 29 to June 5 - **Canadian tiger swallowtails** seen from Wolfville to Butler Road (JT).

June 2 - a **mourning cloak** seen near Greenwood (SH).

June 2 - from a spindle tree (*Euonymus* bush) in Wolfville, lots of **euonymus** nest-building **caterpillars** (and their silk "tents"), plus several adult female **cottony soft scale insects** (*Pulvinaria*, possibly cottony maple scales, *P. innumerabilis*) (BBT,DR).

June 2 - a **curve-toothed geometer** moth (*Eutropha elemataria*), and a very tattered but flying **mourning cloak** butterfly, seen in Wolfville (JT).

June 3 - a **showy emerald** moth (*Dichorda iridaria*) found in Wolfville (JT).

June 4 - 3 **Hobomok skippers** seen along Butler Rd. (JGT,JT).

June 4-5 - **Harris checkerspot** butterflies seen along Butler Rd. & in Wolfville (JT).

June 5 - a **question mark** and a **spring azure** (butterflies) seen in Wolfville (JT).

June 5 - a **clear-winged sphinx** moth seen at Whitehill, Pictou Co. (JW).

June 5 - in Blomidon Prov. Park, several **tiger swallowtails** present; one was repeatedly chased by a **mourning cloak** (JW *et al.*).

June 5-6 - 5 **monarchs** seen at Glenholme (w. of Truro)(TB).

June 8 - a **viceroy** butterfly seen closely at Belleisle, Ann. Co. (PT,JW).

June 9 - a very active **luna moth** flying at Blomidon at 6 p.m., in bright sunny daylight (AW).

June 11 - one adult **monarch** seen in relatively few (this year) **c. milkweeds** along abandoned RR tracks at New Minas -- monarch appeared to be **ovipositing on both milkweed and dogbane plants**, BUT I was unable to find any eggs in a short search (JW).

June 11 - a **banded purple/white admiral** at New Minas; at Lakeville, 2 **common**

**ringlet butterflies** and a **viceroys** seen at Lakeville (JW).

June 12 - at Lakeville, single **mourning cloak & banded purple** seen (HFN, JW).

June 12 - a single, very rare, **Baltimore checkerspot butterfly** seen along main dyke just ne. of Wolfville, along with **black & tiger swallowtails, common ringlets, clouded sulphurs, cabbage butterflies, & banded purple/white admiral** (LPP, JT).

June 13 - **common ringlet butterflies** in good supply, and a very large unidentified **white moth**, seen along Butler Road (AM).

June 14 - at about 9:20 p.m., at Robie Tufts Nature Centre, a large, dark **silk moth** (either polyphemus or cecropia, probably) took flight (JW + Elderhostellers).

June 16 - **banded purples/white admirals** abundant at Sherbrooke Lake Camp; also I identified a **rosette moth** (*Oreta rosea*) there on a window-screen (JW).

June 16 - an adult **luna moth** on a screen at Centreville, King's Co. (BJ).

June 16 - a **luna moth** flying

on Wolfville Ridge (JGT).

June 19 - a possible **sphinx moth?** found on porch near Greenwood (SH).

June 19 & 26 - single **Virginia ctenucha moths** seen at night (at light) and feeding in mid morning, respectively, near Greenwood (SH).

June 21 - a **polyphemus moth** flying in Canning (IP).

June 22 - several **least skippers** at Silver Lake, Lakeville (JT).

June 23 - a day-active **Virginia ctenucha** moth (very beautiful in close-up view) found east of Coldbrook along RR bed (AM).

June 24 - an **Atlantis fritillary** and 2 **tiger swallowtails** near Aylesford Lake (AM).

June 24 - an **Atlantis? fritillary** seen near **dogbane** blossoms near Greenwood (SH).

June 27 - a **monarch** butterfly, about 10 **banded purples/white admirals**, and 3-4 **tiger swallowtails** seen in Keji' Nat. Park Adjunct (Port Joli area)(PM, JW).

June 27 - **common ringlets** found at about half of 13 stops on an observational circuit

including Musquodoboit Valley -- Fred Scott is studying the post-introduction expansion of range in N.S. and wants sightings from naturalists (LPP).

June 30 - one **ctenucha moth** seen flying in a.m. at Grand Pre (JW).

## INSECTS - Diptera

Apr. 8 - a **mosquito** found inside a house near Greenwood (SH).

Apr. 10 - **blackflies** at Lake Echo (ne. of Dartmouth)(TB).

Apr. 15 - from a report on radio by an entomologist -- from a survey in one stream of Kejimikujik Nat. Park last year, **11 species of blackflies** were found: only 2 species bite humans; one species doesn't bite anything!; other species feed on birds, cows, etc. (CBC).

Apr. 21 - an adult **bee fly** found just emerging from leaf-litter at White Hill, Pictou Co. -- had long pointed beak & dark patches on front of wings (MB).

Apr. 23 - a *Bombylius* **bee fly** drinking nectar from garden flowers in Wolfville (JW).

May 2 - **adult blackflies** out at Gaspereau Lake (MH); also

some present at White Rock (JGT).

May 7 - lots of traps out to monitor **filth flies (house flies et al.)** in Grand Pre & Wolfville areas (MY & "SWAT TEAM").

May 15 - **blackflies** galore (but many not biting) in Blomidon Prov. Park; also, in the temporary pond along the Park's Cliff Trail, lots of **phantom-midge larvae**, larvae & pupae of **mosquitoes** present (plus 2 kinds of **caddisfly larvae** in cases, and lots of tiny baby larvae of **backswimmers**)(JW).

May 15 - too many **blackflies** to count, and people had to keep moving to avoid being bitten, in Kejimikujik Nat. Park (SH).

June 3 - my first observation this year of biting **no-see-ums**, in Wolfville at dusk (lots of hungry ones + **mosquitoes** there on June 14)(JW).

June 9 - at Sherbrooke Lake Camp, on rocks protruding from stream and flying just above stream were numerous large brown **craneflies** with patterned wings which they held outward at rest (acting territorial in that chasing was frequent)(JW).

June 12 - lots of **deerflies** (but

not biting much) in Bonnet Lake Barrens Wilderness Area, Guys. Co. -- also **backswimmers, stoneflies, lacewings,** etc. seen (RL,EMFN).

## INSECTS - Hymenoptera

Apr. 9 - a **honeybee** seen in a garden near Greenwood (SH).

Apr. 16 - a **bumblebee** active in the Sun at Grand Pre (JW).

Apr. 23 - **solitary bees** active at burrows on a steep-sloped lawn in Wolfville (JW).

Apr. 30 - one living **paper wasp** adult (*Polistes*) in Acadia U.'s Biol. bldg. (JW).

May 5 - a **bumblebee** seen in a garden near Greenwood (SH).

May 5 - a very large overwintered queen **yellowjacket** wasp/hornet seen at Acadia Univ.'s Biology bldg. (JW).

June 4 - **solitary bees** with metallic-green bodies seen along top of dyke ne. of Wolfville (GG,DR).

## FISHES

Apr. 9 - first sign of a run of **rainbow smelt** in Gaspereau River at Melanson (KR).

May 4 - a few **gaspereaux**

seen by fisherpersons in Gaspereau River -- late this year (KR).

May 15 - hundreds of "**minnows**" (small fish) swimming along water's edge, stirring up the water, in Kejimikujik Nat. Park (SH). (My guess is that Sheila observed **banded killifish** in this case -- JW.)

June 9 - in stream-mouth at n. tip of Sherbrooke Lake, lots of spawning-run **white suckers** (revealed to students & me by N.S. Fisheries staff using electric shockers) (JW).

June 12 - several colourful territorial male **3-spined sticklebacks** seen in very shallow water at w. edge of Lakeville's Silver Lake -- also several large schools of **banded killifish** -- none of the abundant **goldfish** seen from shore (HFN,JW).

## AMPHIBIANS

Apr. 9 - in a back-yard pond at Liverpool, after much anticipation, both "**chuggers**" (**wood frogs**) and **spring peepers** began calling (HD).

Apr. 10 - **spring peepers** in full voice at Lumsden Reservoir (BBY).

Apr. 11 - first **spring peepers** heard at Hantsport (JS).



- Apr. 11 (approx.) - **wood frogs** "quacking" at Bedford (PC).
- Apr. 12 - **spring peepers** peeping at Blomidon on N. Mtn. (AW).
- Apr. 16 - **wood frogs** croaking at Avonport (SW).
- Apr. 17 - **wood frogs** calling at Hartlen Point, Dartmouth (PMA).
- Apr. 17 - **spring peepers** heard at S. Williamston (Ann. Co.) and near Greenwood (SH).
- Apr. 18 - **spring peepers** calling, but not wood frogs, at Bedford (PC).
- Apr. 19 - **spring peepers** being heard everywhere now (near Peggy's Cove, etc.)(PMA).
- Apr. 21 - one **American toad** trilling at Avonport (SW).
- Apr. 22 - **spring peepers** calling in evening at Bedford (TB).
- Apr. 24 - one 15-cm. **yellow-spotted salamander** found in Aldersville (n. of New Ross) in a cattle manure-pile (aged) -- lots of **earthworms** were there, & salamander nice & plump (KL).
- Apr. 25 - **leopard frogs** heard snoring at Van Nostrand's Pond (Starr's Pt.) and Hennigar's Marsh (w. of Sheffield Mills) (SH,NSBS,BNS).
- Apr. 27 - an **Am. toad** calling in a flooded part of a hay-field, near White Hill, Pictou Co. (MB).
- May 1 - **Am. toads** heard trilling on dykelands n. of Wolfville (PM,JW).
- May 2 - several "snoring" **leopard frogs** nearly drowned out the red-winged blackbird calls in a cattail marsh near Smiley's Prov. Park (PC,ED).
- May 3 - first **Am. toads** heard calling at Lumsden Reservoir (were noisy until cold weather in mid May)(BBY).
- May 8 - 3 **pickerel frogs** calling with their loud, fast snores in Saxon St. Pond (sw. of Sheffield Mills)(JW).
- May 15 - oodles of **tadpoles** (probably of **wood frogs**?) in a temporary pond along Cliff Trail in Blomidon Prov. Park (JW).
- May 24 - a **green frog** calling (glunk, glunk) at Grand Pre (PM,JW).
- May 27 - a **wood frog** seen on land, not near any water, at Poplar Grove (RN,JW).

May 29 - **American toads** trilling in 2 places along Cheticamp River (Salmon Pool Trail), Cape Breton Highlands Nat. Park, in evening (RL,FNSN,JW).

June 1 - several **green frogs** glunking and an **Am. toad** trilling in Belleisle Marsh, Ann. Co. (JW).

June 10 - the remains of hatched eggs (green algae-filled broken pieces of spherical envelopes) of **yellow-spotted salamanders** found in spring-fed ponds on Wolfville Ridge & w. of Gaspereau (JW).

June 10 - calling **green frogs** and overwintered large tadpoles of **green frogs** common in very shallow seep-ponds (that never totally freeze in winter) along Kentville Ravine (JW).

June 10 - calling **green frogs** common and one floating raft of their very fresh eggs (5 rafts on June 12) in spring-fed pond on Wolfville Ridge (HFN,JW).

June 11 - good chorus of glunking **green frogs** in permanent pond along canal just below Black River Lake in late afternoon (JW).

June 11 - at shallow n. & w. sides of Lakeville's Silver Lake, large numbers of

**2-year-old tadpoles of bullfrogs** -- several calling adult **bullfrogs** and **green frogs** -- tadpoles were aggregated in very shallow, sunny lake-edges -- I didn't notice any tadpoles that were yearlings (of either species), so 1998 must have been a "bust" year (JW).

June 11 - s. of Chipman Corner, an adult female **bullfrog** was road-killed between a pond and cattail marsh (JW).

June 11 - good chorus of calling **bullfrogs** (at least 5-6)(plus a few **green frogs**) along s. edge of Van Nostrand's Pond at Starr's Point after dark (JW).

June 12 - **toads** trilling, and a **bullfrog** seen, at Lake Eagle, East Preston, Hfx. Co. (TB).

June 12 - **green frogs** & a **pickerel frog** seen in Bonnet Lake Barrens Wilderness Area, Guys. Co. (RL,EMFN).

June 13 - a few **bullfrogs** calling along Butler Road (AM).

June 24 - at McGee Lake (near Aylesford Lake), a **leopard frog** tried several times, unsuccessfully, to catch **damsel flies** (AM).

## REPTILES

Apr. 17 - 2 basking **painted turtles** in Harris' Pond, Canning (JW).

Apr. 23 - 10 basking **painted turtles** in a pond s. of Chipman's Corner (JW).

Apr. 23 - 10 basking **painted turtles** in a small bog in Hants Co. (MH,AK).

May 3 - a half-metre-long **Maritime garter snake** found sunning itself on a driveway on N. Mtn. at Burlington (n. of Berwick)(KL).

May 4/99 - near Berwick at noon, a large **snapping turtle** (5/6 metre from snout to tail-tip) seen swimming up a peat-bog drainage-ditch -- tail about 3 in. diameter at base & 6 in. long (male?), head & neck about 7 in., "head as big as a pack of smokes" but longer & thinner (JS).

May 8 - 11 **painted turtles** basking together in a Lower Canard pond (JW).

May 10 - an unidentified **snake** seen in the talons of a **broad-winged hawk** (normal fare for broad-wings), Pictou Co. (KM).

May 22 - a 0.7-metre-long **garter snake** seen in Blomidon Prov. Park, near the Cliff Trail Pond (JW *et al.* ).

May 29 - a female **eastern painted turtle** seen sunning herself on a log in a pond, at Aylesford (SH).

June 2 - this year's first nesting of **Blanding's turtle** at Kejimikujik Nat. Park was on May 31 (a record early date) -- tonight 8 females were on one nesting beach but no eggs were laid (PH *et al.*).

June 5 - a baby (last year's) **garter snake** was caught by Gizmo (a cat) in Wolfville (JT).

June 5 - a 7-inch **red-bellied snake** found while weeding in a garden near Greenwood (SH).

June 11 - in Hennigar's Market Pond at Greenwich, basking were 9 **painted turtles** and a **RED-EARED TURTLE** -- latter is an exotic, was undoubtedly someone's released pet (illegal), and has been there at least a year (JW).

June 12 - 2 **eastern smooth green snakes** + a **red-bellied snake** seen in Bonnet Lake Barrens Wilderness Area, Guys. Co. (RL,EMFN).

June 12-13 - 2 **snapping turtles** laying eggs in roadside gravel near a bridge near Greenfield, Queens Co. (HD).

June 15 - a **snapping turtle**, 11.5 inches in shell-length, crossed the Bog Road near Hantsport in mid afternoon (HBS).

## MAMMALS

Apr. 12 - 4 prob. **little brown bats** flying at dusk in yard on N. Mtn. near The Lookoff (EBM).

Apr. 17 - a **bat (little brown?)** flying in a Wolfville yard for over an hour in mid afternoon, and it was followed very closely for 15+ minutes by a brown **moth** that had broad yellow bands at the wing-bases (yellow underwings?) (& bat was seen again the next afternoon)(DT).

June 12 - a **red bat** & 4-5 prob. **little brown bats** seen at Lake Eagle, East Preston, Hfx. Co. (TB).

Apr. 25 - 2 **snowshoe hares** seen in Kejimikujik Nat. Park (PK).

Apr. 25 - a very large **snowshoe hare** ("big as a fox") seen at Wentworth, Cumb. Co. (HDr).

May 1 - numerous **snowshoe hares & muskrats** seen at Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary (TP).

June 13 - **snowshoe hares**

plentiful along Butler Road (AM).

June 14 - a **snowshoe hare** in a Wolfville Ridge garden (JGT).

Apr. 24 - 4 young **northern flying squirrels**, but no mother, were in an old bluebird nest-box near Antigonish (RL).

June 1 - at Steven's Cove, near Chester Basin, well after dark, a "**flying squirrel** landed on the screen of our second-storey bedroom window (the light was on). It scrambled up the screen and onto the top of the open window, then glided off into the darkness" (HBS).

Apr. 2 - a road-killed **groundhog or woodchuck** along hwy. 101 near Paradise (TF,JN).

May 8 - a **groundhog** seen along Saxon St., n. of Canard Pond (JW).

May 22,26 - 4 **eastern chipmunks** gathering seeds beneath a bird feeder near Greenwood (SH).

Apr. 6 - near Greenwood, a **field vole** seen under a bird feeder (SH).

Apr. 17 - at least 6 **muskrats** swimming in Harris' Pond, Canning (PM,JW).

Apr. 25 - a freshly killed **muskrat** on south dyke of Van Nostrand's Pond at Starr's Point (JW *et al.* ).

Apr. 25 - **muskrats** seen swimming in Harris' Pond (Canning) and Canard Pond (SH,NSBS).

Apr. 2 - a **porcupine** foraging along a woodland edge in Kingston (in a field)(TF,JN).

Apr. 25 - a probable **field vole** (or large **shrew**?) was presented by an adult **red-tailed hawk** to its mate at the Acadia Univ. nest (NSBS,BNS).

Apr. 25 - about 12 **porcupines** seen along hwy. 102 between Hfx. & Wentworth, Cumb. Co. (alive but dangerously close to pavement)(HDr).

May 15 - 7 **porcupines** seen in Kejimikujik Nat. Park: 4 eating along roadside, 3 in trees (SH).

June 16 - near Greenwood, a **porcupine** called loudly from a big apple tree, then made more vocal noise during the next week at midnight & 3 a.m. (SH).

May 8 - a **mink** seen "wrestling with an eel" at Grand Desert salt-marsh (East Shore)(PR *et al.*).

June 30 - 3 **mink** (a family?)

seen along dyke w. of Wolfville sewage ponds (DT,GT,TT).

Apr. 2 - a new den of a **skunk** found in back of a woodshed at Delhaven (JN).

May 12 - in Palmeto Woods, w. Kentville, a **skunk** emerged onto a trail only 5 feet from this observer! -- also a **white-tailed deer** seen there (AM).

Apr. 17 - an **otter** seen at Conrad's Beach (Eastern Shore)(PMA).

May 15 - an **otter**, a **red fox**, and a **snowshoe hare** seen on a walk to Matthew's Lake (South Shore)(DY).

June 13 - an **otter** seen with a large, living **common eel** in its mouth, passed within 3 metres of 2 astounded observers at Blue Rocks (MT).

May 8 or 9 - near the mouth of the West River, Keji' Nat. Park, crashing in the bush was heard, then a **black bear** climbed up a pine 15 feet, looked around, then jumped down & ran away (DMA).

May 9 - a **black bear** crossed hwy. 101 near the Mt. Uniacke exit (SE,GM).

June 3 - reports of many sightings of **black bears** in the

Kejimikujik area this Spring, and "they never threaten anyone, don't get into garbage, don't damage tents .... they just live naturally (PH).

May 2 - at midnight a small pack of **coyotes** howled at Avonport (SW).

May 19 - a **coyote** crossed hwy. 101 e. of Kingston (JGT).

May 22 - along hwy. 101 between Middleton & Annapolis-Royal, a **red fox** and a **coyote** seen in early a.m. (SBF,JGT).

June 12 - a **coyote** seen on Wolfville Ridge in early a.m. (JGT).

May 10 - near Greenwood, in mid afternoon, a **red fox** was seen along a gravel road, ran into & out of bushes, pounced on something in a ditch, and passed within 2 metres of SH in her car.

June 18 - 2 freshly-dug large **red fox** found at Whitehill, Pictou Co. (MB).

June 29 - a lovely reddish-gray **red fox**, apparently still in its long winter fur?, seen at noon at Wallbrook (JW).

Mar. 27 - one **gray seal** seen at the start of the Cape Split trail (TF,JN).

June 27 - 100+ **harbour seals** basking & interacting vocally (barks & moans) on rocks at low tide at Keji' Nat. Park Adjunct (PM,JW).

Mar. 23 - a 3.5-foot **harbour porpoise** was found **stranded** on mud along Wellington Dyke -- rescuers kept its skin wet, got it onto a toboggan, dragged it to a vehicle, drove it to Kingsport, dragged it well out on mud there, and released it into the water, hopefully OK? (GF,LJ) -- BRAVO!

Apr. 2 - one dead and smelly very small whale (**harbour porpoise?**) was found on Martinique Beach (UH).

Apr. 6 - from one of the Wolfville dykes, a probable **harbour porpoise** was spotted in the mouth of the Cornwallis River as the tide was starting to ebb -- the small whale was swimming out to sea, but before that its blow could even be heard (FC).

Apr. 23 - 3 **harbour porpoises** seen just outside the mouth of the Cornwallis River (n. of Wolfville sewage ponds)(JT).

June 5 - a woman has seen a **beluga** at Boylston (upriver from Guysborough) and believes it's **WILMA** (but Wilma-watchers don't think it shows her markings?)(CBC). Earlier in Spring a beluga turned up at Sydney, Cape

Breton, coincidentally with the absence of Wilma in the Guysborough area -- she may now be mature and hunting for a mate? (Confused? -- Join the club!)(JW).

May 30 - several **minke whales**, including 2 cow-calf pairs, seen off Cheticamp, Cape Breton (DL,FNSN,JW).

June 13 - a few **minke whales** seen off Brier Island (CH).

May 10 - an early adult **humpback whale** in Westport Harbour (2nd sighting at Brier Is. this year)(CH).

June 18-24 - the big **whales** -- **right, finback, & humpback** -- were just moving into the Bay of Fundy -- plus **minkes** & lots of **harbour porpoises** (CH).

Apr. 20 - an adult female **North American right whale** was found dead off Cape Cod (CP).

June 5 - one very early group of **N. Am. right whales** found, including a juvenile entangled in fishing gear, between Brier Island & Grand Manan Is. -- the youngster was freed of its burden (DTo *et al.* ).

June 19 - the **N. Am. right whale** population showed a record low of only 4 cow-calf pairs this year (CBC).

June 22 - so far this year, in the Bay of Fundy there have been 3 different **right whales** found entangled in fishing gear (gear from USA in 2 of them) -- 1 was released from gear, 1 has disappeared and perhaps died, 3rd whale couldn't be helped (ad. female)(CBC).

Apr. 12,17,&27 - 5,5, & 4, resp., seen at Greenwood, at S. Williamston (Ann. Co.), & near Greenwood, at various times of day (SH).

May 17 - a **white-tailed deer** seen in a tidal marsh just n. of Hantsport in mid a.m. (RB + Elderhostelers).

June 12 - a **white-tailed deer** seen at early a.m. west of White Rock (JGT).

June 16 - a yearling **moose** seen at Round Hill, Ann. Co. (LR, *fide* DJ).

## CONTRIBUTORS -- THANK YOU ALL!

LB - Larry Bogan  
MB - Mark Brennan  
RB - Roy Bishop  
RBa - Rick Ballard  
SB - Sherman Bleakney  
TB - Tony Bezanson  
CBC - CBC Radio News  
FC - Frank Cheeseman  
PC - Patricia Chalmers  
BD - Brian Dalzell  
BDe - Bernie Deveau  
ED - Elizabeth Doull  
HD - Harold Dobson  
HDR - Heather Drope  
SE - Samara Eaton

CF - Cathy Fulton	FNSN - Fed. N.S. Naturalists
GF - Graham Fisher	HFN - Halifax Field Naturalists
MF - Meredith Flannery	JN - Joe Nocera
MFu - Marian Fulton	MN - Murray Newell
TF - Trina Fitzgerald	RN - Ruth Newell
SBF - Sandra & Bernard Forsythe	TN - Tom Neily
GG - Glenys Gibson	CP - Can. Press
MG - May Goring	IP - Ian Paterson
CH - Carl Haycock	LPP - Linda & Peter Payzant
HCH - Hfx. Chronicle-Herald	MP - Mary Pratt
JH - Jack Herbin	DR - Dick Rogers
MH - Matt Holder	TP - Terry Paquet
PH - Peter Hope	KR - Kevin Reid
SH - Sheila Hulford	LR - Lloyd Robinson
UH - Ulli Hoeger	PR - Peter Richard
BJ - Bob Johnson	BNS - Blomidon Nat. Soc.
DJ - Dave Jones	DS - David Silverberg
LJ - Lorraine Johnson	FS - Fred Scott
AK - Andrea Kingsley	HBS - Hilary & Bob Sircom
PK - Pat Kelly	JS - Jamie Simpson
DL - Dave Lawley	NSBS - N.S. Bird Soc.
FL - Fulton Lavender	NSWFS - N.S. Wild Flora Soc.
KL - Kim Lipscomb	PS - Pat Stewart
RL - Randy Lauff	DT - Dianne Thorpe
WL - Wanda Langley	DTO - Deborah Tobin
AM - Angus MacLean	GT - Gordon Thorpe
BM - Bob McDonald	JGT - Judy & Gordon Tufts
CM - Chris Majka	JT - Jean Timpa
CMu - Carl Munden	MT - Miriam Tams
DM - David Muttart	NSNT - N.S. Nature Trust
Dma - Don MacLaughlin	PT - Phil Taylor
EBM - Eleanor & Bernard Mason	TT - Trevor Thorpe
FM - Fred MacKenzie	AW - Anne Woolaver
KM - Ken McKenna	JW - Jim Wolford
GM - Gregory MacAskill	SW - Sherman Williams
PM - Pat Martin	BBY - Betty & Barry Yoell
PMa - Peter MacLeod	DY - David Young
EMFN - Eastern Mainland Field Naturalists	MY - Mateo Yorke

## Bird Sightings from Mid March to Mid July by Jean Timpa

Editor's Note: Space limitations in this issue dictate a very truncated summary of the reports received. We hope that the many contributors who have conscientiously reported their adventures in the field will not be discouraged when they do not see in print reports of field events. The enthusiasm of BNS members simply exceeded the space available in this issue.

### LEAST BITTERN

A male of this N.S. rarity was seen by Judy and Gordon Tufts and many other excited birders May 19 and 23rd in a little marshy



pond on Brier Island, Digby Co.

### WOOD DUCK

Several observers reported seeing these gorgeous male wood ducks this spring from the Belleisle Marsh, to ponds at Grand Pre, New Minas, and in the river at White Rock.

### GARGANEY

One of the big "tickers" this spring, the improbable sighting of a male Garganey at the Belleisle Marsh ponds near Bridgetown, Annapolis Co. has thrilled many of us since Eric Ruff and his wife discovered it in May. It has not always been easy to find, and many of us also picked up bonus ticks (the arthropod variety) in trying, but it was well worthwhile seeing the poor harassed male Blue-winged Teal trying to defend his mate from the amorous advances of this close European relative. Oh, if he could only have told us the adventures of how he got to NS!

### GOLDEN EAGLE

June 25. I saw an adult GOLDEN Eagle on the Aylesford Lake (just south of Coldbrook) in mid-afternoon. Although I say "adult" I could see little of the tawny brown color on the back of the head and neck. This may have been because of the angle of the sun but the lightly banded tail and completely dark underparts were clearly seen. It circled quite low near me but as I got out of the car, it disappeared rapidly and I did not see it when I returned past the spot about 1/2 hour later. This seems to be typical of such sightings: these individuals are wanderers.

### MERLIN

At least one pair has been calling and flying back and forth here in Wolfville since early spring. One pair may have nested at the intersection of King and Victoria Streets. In mid-July they have been seen on numerous occasions harassing the Chimney Swifts as they circle the chimney before entering in the evening.

### PEREGRINE FALCON

A Federal government official doing a Peregrine study told Sean Timpa on July 23rd that 18 Peregrines were active on the Wolfville side of the Minas Basin and that 20 were presently hunting on the opposite shore. Their prey is the 75,000 shorebirds (mostly Semipalmated Sandpipers) presently fattening up at Evangeline Beach.

## WILD TURKEY

Sheila Hulford reported seeing a tree full at dusk, noisily gabbling away in the Tremont area in the late winter.

## SHORT-EARED OWL

April 17, at the Guzzle, (the end of Long Island) 2 were seen by Sherman Bleakney, and Brenda/Bill Thexton. There have been no reports of nesting SEOs on the dykes here in Kings Co. this summer.

## LONG-EARED OWL

In recent years we have not seen many of these owls whose numbers depend heavily upon the Meadow Vole population. Bernard Forsythe knew of a pair in the Port Williams area. early in the spring, but one disappeared, and then the other. Bernard suspects that a Great Horned Owl may have taken had LEO #1 for lunch, while #2 fled for its life or was dessert.

## BARRED OWL

Bernard Forsythe had 16 nesting pairs, 15 in boxes, and 1 in a natural cavity, and they successfully raised 35 young, the best record they have ever had.

## DOWNY WOODPECKER

The best story comes from Gail Herbin at their cottage on Black River Lake, Kings Co. The parent birds brought the young one to the plastic Hummingbird feeder from which the plastic flowers had been chewed by the squirrels, so they could have better access to the sugar water. So, in a woodpecker see, woodpecker do situation they now drink sugar water at the feeder just as the Hummingbirds and squirrels do!

## BICKNELL'S THRUSH

Very localized to the plateau area of Cape Breton Highlands National Park, several of our members who went to the Nova Scotia Naturalists Federation meetings in Cheitcamp were fortunate enough to hear and see these special thrushes. Merritt Gibson wrote a column in the Advertiser about finding one or two.

## NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

The nest at the Grand Pre corner produced young, although one adult was killed when it collided with a car. There is at least one

Mockingbird behind the Jack and Gail Herbin's house on Main St. in Wolfville and possibly a nesting pair and numerous successful nesting are reported from Port Williams. Bill/Matthew Thexton saw 2 at Blueberry Acres, Saxon St. Road, Sheffield Mills, on July 5 and Mike McCall saw two at Hall's Harbour July 21st.

## WARBLERS

There were a lot of Yellow warblers everywhere I went, and I just hope that the others were doing as well. Certainly there were lots of Yellow-rumps, Common Yellowthroats, Ovenbirds, Northern Waterthrush, and Redstarts reported. Of a trip to Keji on May 15, Sheila Hulford writes: "Lots of Yellow-rumps, Northern Parulas, Black-throated Green, Black and White Warblers, Palm Warbler, and Ovenbirds (heard)." JET enjoyed watching and listening to a lovely male Chestnut-sided in Bear River on May 28th. We hope that the warblers are reproducing a little better, but we should be looking at our own forest cutting practices here in NS, not just those in the tropics.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL:** One pair at least seems to stay near the old EKM Hospital ravine. An early nest was destroyed, but the male was heard singing soon after. Does anyone know if they had any better luck. I hope the construction of the new building and gardens won't upset them too much.

Please send reports for mid July to mid September to Jean Timpa at PO Box 1382, Wolfville, NS or by e-mail to [jtimpa@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:jtimpa@ns.sympatico.ca) or call at 542-5678 for last minute or VIP notices! Please include in your notes birds that you are NOT seeing but which you think you should. Do you want to see long lists, or just the very rare sightings? Please include sightings of interesting or unusual behaviour. Do you want the list to go beyond the Valley or should it be confined to say, West Hants, Kings and eastern Annapolis?

## What's In The Sky? by Roy Bishop

New Moon: July 13, August 11, September 9, October 9.  
Full Moon: July 28, August 26, September 25 (Harvest Moon),  
October 24.

The Autumn Equinox is on Thursday, September 23 at 8:31 am (ADT)

### *The Milky Way*

On clear, dark, moonless summer evenings, after the end of twilight, the most stupendous astronomical sight visible to human eyes arches across the heavens. We call it the Milky Way, as if it were a path across the sky. However, by 1930 astronomers realized what it is we are seeing --- an edge-on view of the immense spiral galaxy within which we live. Our Sun is but one of 100 billion stars making up this vast pinwheel whose glow is the combined light of a multitude of distant stars. To stand on a dark July night and contemplate this sight sends chills through one's body.

All the individual stars visible in the sky, the relatively nearby stars, are part of this structure. Our Sun with its planets, asteroids and comets is an obscure star on the inner side of a spiral arm about 25,000 light-years from the centre of the Milky Way Galaxy. Our galaxy is more than 100,000 light-years across, and rotates ponderously about once every 200 million years. Since *Homo sapiens* appeared on Earth, the galaxy has rotated barely 0.2 of a degree.

The mottled appearance of our galaxy is primarily because near its central plane are vast dark clouds of interstellar dust that hide the light of stars beyond. On July evenings our view is inward, with the central portion of the galaxy lying low above the southern horizon (for observers in Canada), beyond the constellation Sagittarius. Were it not for the obscuring interstellar dust, you could read a newspaper by the bright glow from the central part of our galaxy 25,000 light-years away. On winter nights the Milky Way also spans the sky, but we are then looking outward, away from its centre, and the milky path is not as bright and obvious. Nevertheless, during my voyage to Bermuda on the Bark Endeavour last autumn, in the dark early morning hours the winter Milky Way cast broad paths of reflected light across the sea on both sides of the ship.

The next clear, moonless summer night that you find yourself far from the light pollution of towns and yard lights, gaze upward at the Milky Way and see it as the immense edge-on galaxy of which you are a part --- a vast, three-dimensional, edge-on, island universe of dust and stars, containing for a time in one of its arms the Sun, Earth, and white-throated sparrows.

## Meteors

The annual Perseid Meteor Shower will be at its best on the nights of August 11 and 12. Since there is a solar eclipse at dawn on August 11 (see below), moonlight will not interfere with viewing the Perseids this year. If the sky is clear, pick a viewing site away from the lights of civilization and with a good view of the eastern half of the sky. On average, at least one meteor per minute should be visible. However, the rate can vary from several in a few seconds, to nothing for several minutes. Take a lawn chair, warm blanket, hat and gloves to discourage mosquitoes, and enjoy the celestial show!

## An August Solar Eclipse

From eastern Canada, Wednesday, August 11, brings a rare dawn --- the New Moon rises in front of the Sun. This last happened in Nova Scotia in 1983. At 6:18 am daylight time on August 11, the usual round Sun will rise as a pointed dagger. Maximum eclipse is about 6:35 am, and by 7:34 am the eclipse will be over. This is a total eclipse, but the path of totality does not touch land in North America. Nova Scotians will see a deep partial eclipse. The Moon's umbral shadow first touches the Atlantic Ocean south of Nova Scotia at dawn, and then drifts quickly eastward, crossing southeastern England, central Europe, the Black Sea, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, and leaves Earth at sunset east of India.

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A Warning: Although you often glance at the rising or setting Sun, do not attempt to stare at the Sun as it rises on the morning of August 11. A quick glance is no more dangerous than on any other day, but because of the Sun's strange pointed shape that morning, you will

be tempted to stare at it. To do so for more than a second or so is potentially dangerous. Heavy haze or thin cloud can dim the Sun sufficiently to permit viewing for a few seconds, but do NOT attempt to look at the Sun with binoculars or a telescope under any circumstances unless you have a proper solar filter securely attached over the front end of the instrument.

For naked eye viewing that morning, a simple, safe technique is to look at the Sun through a piece of rectangular, shade #14 welder's glass, available for a few dollars at most welding supplies shops (Use #14, not another number).

If #14 welder's glass is not available, another simple, safe technique is to use a small mirror inside of a house. First use masking tape or duct tape to cover all but a small piece of the mirror. The spot not covered should be about the size of the eraser on the end of a pencil. Place the mirror in sunlight coming through a window and direct the reflected beam of light several metres away inside the room to a viewing screen, such as a blank wall or piece of white cardboard. Practice this on any sunny morning a few days prior to August 11 to make sure that you understand what to do, and that the window has a clear view of the rising Sun (hills, trees or



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other buildings to the east of you could delay the appearance of the Sun until after the eclipse is over!). The round spot of light on the viewing screen is an image of the Sun. During the hour after sunrise on August 11, the image of the Sun will not be round!

### *Planets*

Mars, which was bright and orange when near to us in the spring, remains in the southwestern evening sky for the rest of the year. However, Earth is the faster planet and as we leave Mars further behind it is becoming dimmer, lower in the sky, and less conspicuous.

Venus, which dominated the western evening sky all spring, vanishes late in July, passing between us and the Sun on August 20. However, it quickly vaults into the pre-dawn sky and is a brilliant beacon in the east as dawn begins on September and October mornings. Venus, especially when it moves into the quiet, mystical, pre-dawn sky, is the most common cause of UFO reports --- and it is a UFO (unidentified flying object) for the many people who do not know what it is!

Jupiter and Saturn also decorate the morning eastern sky this summer, rising progressively earlier from night-to-night. Jupiter is to the right of and brighter than Saturn. By autumn both of these giant planets rise as evening twilight ends and are in the sky all night. Both are show pieces in a telescope, and are well-placed for viewing from the latitude of Nova Scotia this autumn.

### *A Telescope for Christmas?*

A good, small astronomical telescope costs about \$2000, no more than a small outboard motor or large-screen TV. A telescope requires no gas, makes no noise, has no commercials, provides real images, and will last a lifetime. I highly recommend one, especially for a young person with an interest in astronomy.

But caveat emptor! I have never seen an astronomical telescope of adequate quality for sale at a department or camera store. There is not a retail outlet in Atlantic Canada which sells honest astronomical telescopes. A simple criterion is price: any astronomical telescope selling for less than \$800 is junk. You get what you pay for. Cheap telescopes (cheap in price, but cheap also in mechanical and optical quality) are made because people

buy them. The price is "right". Don't blame the retailers --- most are no more knowledgeable than their customers concerning telescopes. And don't blame the manufacturers --- they are only fulfilling a demand. It is simply not possible to manufacture good small telescopes, sell them for a few hundred dollars, and not lose money. So they manufacture trash telescopes, sell them for a few hundred dollars, and make money.

If you are in the market for a small astronomical telescope this Christmas and are not willing to spend at least a thousand dollars, put the few hundred dollars into a good pair of binoculars. In any case, binoculars are the best way to get started in observational astronomy, and are an essential tool for the experienced amateur astronomer or naturalist. In contrast, a \$399.99 junk astronomical telescope is useless, frustrating, a waste of money, and will end up gathering dust in a closet.

#### MAG

The Minas Astronomy Group (MAG) meets monthly (except July and August) on the second Saturday at seven (SSS) on the second floor of Huggins Science Hall at Acadia. Like the meetings of the Blomidon Naturalists Society, MAG meetings are open to anyone and MAG members are of all ages and backgrounds. Call Roy Bishop (542-3992).

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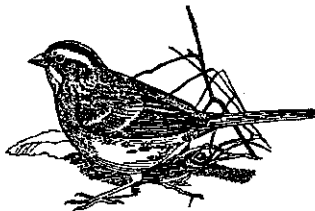
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Cotoneaster	Serviceberry
Hawthorne	Honeysuckles
Oregon Grape	Privet
Daphne	Bayberry
Elderberry	Highbush Cranberry

# Blomidon Naturalists Society 1999 Membership Fees

Each member receives four issues yearly of the BNS 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. Members may also join the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists through the BNS and will receive their quarterly newsletter; the membership is not tax-deductible.

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

Harold Forsyth  
RR #2, Wolfville, NS. BOP 1X0

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**Memberships are due January 1st, 1999**

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

Information	Source	Office	Home
Rocks & Fossils	Geology Dept. Acadia U.	542-2201	
Fish	NS Dept. of Natural Resources	679-6091	
Flora - General	Fungi	Ruth Newell Darryl Grund	585-1355 542-2095
		Nancy Nickerson	585-1252 542-9214
	Lichens	Karen Casselman	679-5333 542-9332
	Seaweeds	Darryl Grund	424-7370 633-2837
			585-1252 542-9214
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	585-1684 542-7650
		Jean Timpa	542-5678
Hawks & Owls	Bernard Forsythe		542-2427
Falcons & Eagles	Peter Austin-Smith		542-2109
Mammals	Tom Herman	585-1469	678-0383
Amphibians & Reptiles	Sherman Bleakney		542-3604
	Jim Wolford	585-1684	542-7650
Seashore & Marine Life	Sherman Bleakney		542-3604
	Jim Wolford	585-1684	542-7650
	Michael Brylinsky	585-1509	582-7954
Indian Prehistory & Archeology	Ellis Gertridg�		542-2816
	James Legge		542-3530
Astronomy	Roy Bishop		542-3992
	Sherman Williams	542-3598	542-5104
	Larry Bogan		678-0446