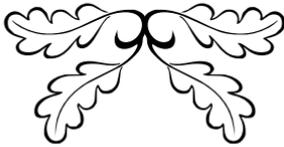


# Blomidon Naturalists Society



SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Volume 35 · Number 2



RICHARD STERN

*Tree Swallow*

*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



## **BNS Executive**

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### *President*

John Harwood 582-3320

### *Vice-president*

Richard Stern 678-1975

### *Treasurer*

Ed Sulis 678-4609

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Helen Archibald 582-1561

## **Directors**

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Glenys Gibson 582-1273

Jean Gibson Collins 678-4725

Patrick Kelly 798-3329

Darrell Slauenwhite 684-0430

Jean Timpa 542-5678

Barry Yoell 542-9240

The Blomidon Naturalists Society is a member of the Sable Island Preservation Trust and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (Nature Nova Scotia) and is an affiliate member of the Canadian Nature Federation (Nature Canada). The Blomidon Naturalists Society is a registered charity. Receipts (for income-tax purposes) will be issued for all donations.

THE BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY

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## **BNS Newsletter**

The Blomidon Naturalists Society Newsletter is published quarterly (March, June, October, & December) by The Blomidon Naturalists Society.

Contributions to the BNS newsletter are always welcome. Articles may be reprinted with permission of the author or the editor. Credit the Blomidon Naturalists Society Newsletter. Unless otherwise stated, opinions are those of authors, not necessarily the Blomidon Naturalists Society. For subscription information, see the membership fees form at the back of this newsletter. If you change your address, please notify us at the address above.

## **Editorial Board**

*Chair:* Jean Timpa (542-5678)

*Committee:* Merritt Gibson, Sherman Williams, George Alliston

*Production:* Doug Linzey & Andrew Steeves

*Distribution:* Bill & Brenda Thexton, Judy Tufts, Lorna Hart

*Advertising:* Larry Friedman (584-3844)

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BNS members are encouraged to share unusual or pleasurable nature stories through the pages of the *BNS Newsletter*. If you have a particular area of interest, relevant articles and stories are always welcome. Send them to Jean Timpa:

1 – 25 GASPEREAU AVENUE,  
WOLFVILLE, NS B4P 2C5  
*jtimpa@ns.sympatico.ca*

Digital photographs should be submitted to  
*doug@fundymud.com*

**Submission deadline for Fall:  
September 10, 2008**

## *A New Face*

by Doug Linzey, associate editor

For almost eight years now, I've been helping the editor of this newsletter get it out the door. While my very able colleagues have consistently come up with the necessary contents (thanks to many of you naturalists out there), I've concentrated on the mundane tasks of copy-editing and layout. Fortunately, that's the part I like. If it were left up to me to solicit material for the newsletter, it would be seriously thinner than what you're used to. That's the nice thing about human beings – even though we share many interests, we are good at, and turned on by, different things.

From the time I took over this job from Matt Holder in 2000 until now, we've had the newsletter printed at the Acadia University print shop. The crew there is willing and capable, and their prices have always more or less fit our budget. The only problem (and you've probably noticed this) is that photographs do not reproduce very well, and often opposite pages don't line up very well either. The technology that allows our newsletter to be printed at a reasonable price is essentially a big, very fast copier. You get what you pay for.

You can imagine what a surprise it was for Jean and me when Andrew Steeves, of Gaspereau Press, expressed interest in printing the newsletter. Andrew is a member of BNS, and a keen outdoorsman who regularly posts accounts of his outings to the e-mail forum NatureNS. Andrew and his business partner, Gary Dunfield, told us that they would like to print the BNS newsletter in journal form on their offset presses, and that they would donate the cost over and above what our normal expenditure would be at the print shop. This struck us as an offer not to be ignored, and BNS treasurer Ed Sulis agreed.

As I write this, I have no idea what this issue will really look like, but I know it will be great. The contents will be familiar, but the look and the feel will be different. We're hoping to differentiate the four annual issues by colour so they'll look good on your shelf and you'll be able to tell them apart. You'll already have noticed that although the newsletter is the same size as before, the typeface is new, the layout is fresh, and the book tends to lie flat when you open it.

As always, we welcome ideas and input. Let us know what you think, and if you have any spectacular photos of local natural history interest that would reproduce well in black and white (we're not going colour yet), please send them along to me at [doug@fundymud.com](mailto:doug@fundymud.com).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Great big thanks and appreciation to all of you who have not only helped in so many ways to produce another fine issue of the BNS newsletter, but also to those of you who have contributed to the smooth functioning of our organization this past quarter. Without your time, thoughtfulness, and energy, we just could not be the best that we are. Big bouquets of forget-me-nots to all of you who came forth and attended functions or made them happen.

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#### EXECUTIVE NOTES

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## *Summer 2008*

by John Harwood, BNS president

It is not very often that anything contained in Executive Notes can be classified as exciting, but I think we have a first. Thanks to BNS member Andrew Steeves, who is co-owner of Gaspereau Press, our newsletter has been produced in print format rather than in photocopy. This

means that everything will be clearer, especially the photographs. Our challenge now is to make the copy as good as the process.

Thanks to the generosity of Andrew and his partner, Gary Dunfield, we will be able to produce and distribute a better product for approximately the same cost as previously. On behalf of BNS, thank you very much indeed, Andrew.

As we head into summer, I am pleased to report that our paid-up membership base is satisfactory, though I should add that we can always accommodate more members. Our financial situation is good; we can meet all our financial obligations, including top-up funding for the Green Dragon summer program, should that be necessary.

As you will have noted, our program of monthly meetings and field trips is in good shape, with lots of interesting things to hear about and lots of places to go and things to do. Patrick seems to have a bottomless kitbag of goodies for us. Thanks, Patrick.

Harold Forsyth and his Green Dragon team have been working hard to attain funding and hire staff. At the time of writing, not all the pieces are in place, but we can be confident that everything will come together in time and that all the children who take advantage of the program will have an interesting and memorable experience this summer.

You are all aware of the major role that many BNS members played in the Nature Canada 2007 conference. Nature Nova Scotia has expressed appreciation for all the good work by donating \$500 to BNS for the Green Dragon program. Thanks to Nature Nova Scotia and to all the members who played such important roles in making the conference a success.

For more years than anyone can remember, Brenda and Bill Thexton have provided their living room as the venue for meetings of the BNS executive and, I might add, produced wonderful cakes, cookies, and beverages at the end of each one. The executive meeting of May 29 was the last to be held at the Thextons. We are now trying to find a convenient locale for future meetings, but more importantly, we are working to provide a suitable thank you for all those years. Brenda and Bill are already honorary life members, so we have to come up with something else. A team is working on it. In the meantime, thanks B & B.

Most of you will know that our annual general meeting is always held immediately before the October monthly meeting. The agenda is limited to just two items: the annual financial report and the election of a slate of officers for the next twelve months. The first item is easy, particularly in good financial times. Preparing a slate of officers is never so. Vice-president John Belbin is heading up the nominating committee. Jeannie Gibson Collins and Darrell Slauenwhite are assisting him.

This year one of our vice-presidents, Richard Stern, is stepping down owing to the pressure of his work. Richard has stated that he hopes to rejoin the executive at some later date when he has more time available. Similarly, Glenys Gibson is relinquishing her position owing to work pressure, but she will continue her valuable participation on the Green Dragon committee. I very much regret that I too must step down as your president. Eyesight difficulties make my continuing impractical.

I do hope that you will help the nominating committee by volunteering or suggesting suitable candidates.

That's all for this time.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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## *Blomidon Naturalists Society*

### *Summer 2007*

#### MEETINGS

*Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at 7:30 p.m., usually on the third Monday of each month, in the auditorium of the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre on University Avenue, Wolfville. Parking is available at Wheelock Dining Hall, along Crowell Drive immediately east of the Centre, at the Acadia Arena, the Student Union Building, or on Westwood Avenue. Everyone is welcome.*

**Monday, September 15, 2008** – TBA

**Monday, October 20, 2008** – *North of Norway, North of 80: Voyages in Svalbard and Greenland*, by Blake Maybank. Canada shares the Arctic with four other nations, including Norway (the Svalbard Islands) and Denmark (Greenland). Blake spent five weeks last summer in Svalbard and Greenland on an expedition cruise ship, and returned with tales and photos of Arctic wildlife, wildflowers, history, and landscapes. And ice. Lots of ice. Join Blake as he shares his adventures, and bring your thermal underwear.

Blake Maybank is a former employee of Parks Canada (chief park naturalist in Gros Morne, among other posts), and is now a writer, naturalist, and guide. He is the author of *Birding Sites of Nova Scotia* and *The National Parks and Other Wild Places of Canada*. A member of the Nova Scotia Bird Society for 25 years, he is currently the editor of *Nova Scotia Birds* and is a regional editor for *North American Birds*. He wrote the Code of Birding Ethics for the American Birding Association.

**Monday, November 17, 2008** – *Pelagic Odyssey: Ushuaia to Cape Town, with Roy Bishop*. The Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and Tristan da Cunha are the breeding grounds for many species of sea birds. South Georgia, in particular, is an Antarctic oasis of astounding beauty. A New York-based tour company was looking for a “naturalist of the night” to show passengers on a luxury yacht the stars of the southern sky. Would Roy and his wife be interested in an all-expenses-paid cruise in this remote part of the planet, from South America to Africa? Of course!

Roy Bishop is a founding member of the Blomidon Naturalists Society, a past president of the society, and one of its honorary members. Now retired, he was head of Acadia’s department of physics. He is a past president of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and he edited its *Observer’s Handbook* for a Saros cycle. In 1997, the International Astronomical Union named asteroid 6901 “Roybishop” (see <http://ssd.jpl.nasa.gov/sbdb.cgi>).

## FIELD TRIPS

*Unless otherwise indicated, all field trips will begin at the Wolfville waterfront. Everyone is welcome.*

**Tuesdays (until August 26)** – *Nature Counts (Acadia University Woodland Trail Biodiversity List)*. For the third year we are taking a walk on the Woodland Trail every Tuesday evening throughout the spring and summer to look for flowering plants, nesting birds, fungi, butterflies, dragonflies, etc. The purpose of this long-term project, in cooperation with the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre, is to observe the changes in biodiversity over the seasons and over the years. Everyone is invited to participate. Come for one week or every week. You don't have to be an expert, but we need lots of people to show up to help spot and identify the elements of natural history. Some weeks we will have a special leader with an emphasis on a specific field of natural history. If you would like to lead a walk or suggest a particular emphasis, call Melanie at 585-1916. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the main entrance to the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens on University Avenue.

**Saturday, July 5, 2008** – *Back Yard Walk 2*. Our hosts for this event will be Richard and Liz Stern. Their home is at 317 Middle Dyke Road, north from the lights at the intersection of Belcher Street and the dike road from New Minas, and just before Chipmans Corner. The walk will start at 9 a.m. Rain date: Sunday, July 6.

**Saturday, July 5, 2008** – *Butterflies*. (Note that this is a Halifax Field Naturalists trip.) Join Peter and Linda Payzant (861-1607) looking for butterflies typical of the grassy fields and woodland edges of Uniacke Estate Park and later at a woods road in the Pockwock watershed. We can expect a good variety, including fritillaries, blues, sulphurs, and of course several types of



those challenging skippers. Bring binoculars, a hat, and insect repellent. This trip is highly weather-dependent. If you want to be notified by phone about postponement or cancellation, register in advance with Peter (861-1607). Overcast date: Saturday, July 12. Meet at 1:45 p.m. in the Uniacke Estate parking lot. To get there, take Highway 101 to Exit 3 onto Highway 1; follow it north toward Mount Uniacke for about 6–7 km. Watch for the sign on the left.

**Saturday, August 2, 2008** – *Cloud Lake Wilderness Area Canoe Trip*. Patrick Kelly (798-3329, [patrick.kelly@dal.ca](mailto:patrick.kelly@dal.ca)) will lead a canoe trip in the Cloud Lake wilderness area. The trip will be about five hours long, so be sure to bring a hearty lunch, water, drinks, and, of course, life jackets, canoe, and paddles. If you have access to a life jacket but not a canoe there will likely be extra room in one of the canoes. Check with the leader to be sure. The trip will cover Frog Lake as well as Cloud Lake, and you will get a chance to stretch your legs on a 500 m portage between the two lakes. Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot of Avery's Market on Highway 1 in South Berwick (about a 30-minute drive from Wolfville).

**Friday, August 29 to Monday, September 1, 2008** – *NOVA EAST 2008*. Atlantic Canada's longest-running star party will be held at Smileys Provincial Park near Brooklyn in Hants County. Some of the presentations and workshops, as well as the Saturday evening observing session, are open to the public. NOVA EAST is hosted jointly by the Halifax Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the Minas Astronomy Group, and the Nova Central Astronomy Club. This year the guest speaker will be Terence Dickinson. Dickinson is the author of many astronomy books, including the best-selling *NightWatch* (now in its 4th edition) and is the editor of *SkyNews*, Canada's national astronomy magazine. More information can be found at <http://halifax.rasc.ca/ne>.

## *Call for Photos*

2009 BNS Natural History Calendar

Photo submissions are invited for possible use in the 12th edition of the popular BNS Natural History Calendar. Submissions should be in one of three forms: electronic (jpeg format, file size between 300 KB and 2 MB), colour slide, or colour negative. We prefer electronic images. If only a print is available, it should be at least 8 × 10 inches. For colour negatives, it is helpful to include a small print for an initial evaluation of the photo. Negatives, slides, and prints will be returned, so be sure to include your name, telephone number, and postal address.

We prefer photos of natural history interest. Please submit no more than ten of your most suitable photos. Suitability involves technical quality (sharp focus, not under- or over-exposed), composition (object of interest nicely positioned, no distracting background), and content (calendar users will enjoy looking at it for a month). Send submissions before September 1, 2008, to Roy Bishop ([roy@xcountry.tv](mailto:roy@xcountry.tv)) or RR 1, Avonport, NS, BOP 1B0, 542-3992.

*Calendar committee:* Roy Bishop, Merritt Gibson, Sherman Williams



RICHARD STERN

*American Robin carrying food*



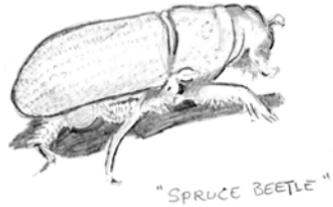
RICHARD STERN

*Song Sparrow*

## Demise of the Spruce?

by Barry Yoell

Late last year, one of CBC's experts was waxing dismal on the global warming theme, and among his predictions was that our forests were destined to lose most of the conifers and become primarily deciduous – by 2050, he suggested. This seemed logical enough, but my recent observations indicate that his time scale is way off. Here on the South Mountain we are already seeing rapid change. Many of the largest spruce have died, many have fallen in the gales and snowstorms in recent years, and the porcupines have decimated large areas. I estimate that the 80 to 90 percent coniferous woods that existed here some 30–40 years ago have changed to 30 to 40 percent coniferous in many areas. The view across Lumsden Pond looking west has progressively changed over the last few years so that the conifers are now distinctly in the minority. Poplar, ash, maple, and birch are rapidly taking over.



How much of this is directly caused by climate change is anyone's guess. Certainly the spruce beetle *Dendroctonus rufipennis* is playing a part. This native Nova Scotia pest lays eggs under the bark of mature spruce. These hatch into minute white grubs that feast on the cambium layer and grow to about 1 cm. They are extremely numerous, often more than two per square centimetre under the bark. They seem to loosen the bark, which peels off the trees, perhaps helped by the woodpeckers who feast on the grubs. (I had hoped that this bark peeling was the work of the Black-backed or Three-toed Woodpecker, but have never seen one on these trees.) The bark is completely removed for some 10 to 15 metres of the lower trunk, and, of course, the tree dies.

It would be interesting to know whether this beetle is more active now with warmer temperatures, both summer and winter, or whether it is just in an upswing of its cycle. Either way, the beetles are a contributing factor to the decline of conifers.

If any of our readers have further information or observations on this matter, we would be pleased to hear from you.

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NATURAL HISTORY

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## *The Slippers Are with Us Once More*

by Darrell Slauenwhite

We who live in western Hants County or eastern Kings County should look upon ourselves as being among the blessed. We have four of Nova Scotia's wild lady's-slippers within our area. I've been told that in historical times (our living memory) the order of blooming times of these flowers was first the Ram's-head Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium arietinum*), followed by the Pink (*C. acaule*), then the Yellow (*C. calceolus*), with the grand finale being the Showy Lady's-slipper (*C. reginae*). That last name says it all! For me it is truly the queen of the lady's-slippers.

In my early years, deep in the western Annapolis Valley, I only knew the Pink Lady's-slipper, and finding one of them was a great treat. Now that I live in the extreme Eastern part of Kings County I have found the other three members of the family. For me, a keen native-plant lover, to find these plants so close to my home, none more than half an hour's drive, is a wonderful thing.

This spring things seem to be a little out of time. First of all, I saw my first Pink Lady's-slipper before the first Ram's-head, and the Yellow were in early bloom at the same time. Could this be a result of global warming?

I was sure that last winter would have been good for native plants. Yet when I went to visit an area of Pink Lady's-slippers, I found that a population of over 80 plants last year was reduced to just 20 plants this year. What happened? Did someone pick the flowers, or were conditions just not right for the plants this spring? Next year should tell me (unless someone out there can tell me sooner).

When I went back to the Ram's-head Lady's-slippers, I was very surprised to find three white Ram's-heads! I don't know how common it is to have white forms of these flowers, but I cannot remember seeing such a thing before.

You will note that I have not given locations for any of the plant populations. It is with mixed feelings that I have left them out, but I don't know who will read this account, and so the locations will remain undisclosed. Should you wish to know where I have found these wonderful plants, give me a call and I will direct you to them.

Happy plant watching!



LADY SLIPPER

## *Nature Nova Scotia*

by Larry Bogan, president, NNS

**M**AY 31–JUNE 1, 2008, BARRINGTON, NS – This is the first time members of Nature Nova Scotia (Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists) have gathered in the southernmost region of Nova Scotia. With its mixture of long inlets, islands, and wooded mainland with a rich natural history, the area is very much worth a visit. Cape Sable Island, south of Barrington, has an Important Bird Area. Many birders visit CSI to see the only place in Canada where American Oystercatchers nest. Acadia University's bird observatory on Bon Portage Island is nearby, but we did not visit it on this occasion.

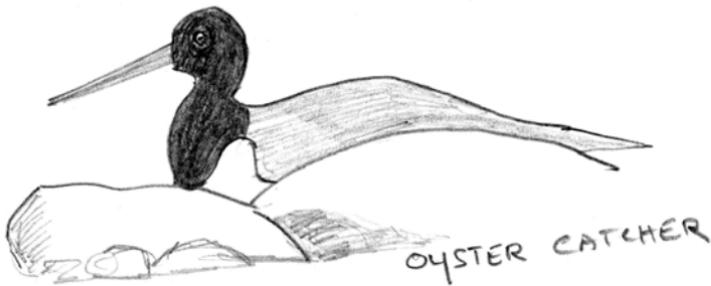
On Friday evening, we gathered at the Barrington Visitor's Centre to meet other naturalists and learn about the area. It was encouraging to see many local people attending. Sherman Boates, a frequent visitor to southwest Nova Scotia, described its special aspects, rare plants, and biodiversity. After more cheese and wine, we walked up to Wireless Hill for owling and a look at the sky. Unfortunately, the owls (if they were there) stayed quiet, but the sky was spectacularly clear. I pointed out the planets, bright stars, and constellations. The International Space Station trundled across the northern sky for added entertainment.

Saturday was devoted to day-long field trips to Cape Sable Island for birding (with Sid Smith) and botany (Reg and Ruth Newell); the Pubnicos for Roseate Terns and other birds (Ted d'Eon); Port La Tour and Baccaro Point (Joan Czapalay); and local bogs for rare sundew and carnivorous plants (Sherman Boates).

Rain was predicted but held off until evening, and we actually had sunny periods in the afternoon. It was cold ( $< 10^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) on the windy, east side of Cape Sable Island in the morning, and we needed all the clothes we had.

I was on CSI all day to see the oystercatchers and Piping Plovers, which we did see, but we missed the Baltimore Orioles that had been visiting local feeders. Sid Smith, our guide, was the lighthouse keeper on Cape Sable for many years, and his mother-in-law was Evelyn M. Richardson (the lighthouse keeper and author), so we had some interesting stories of the area during our tour.

In the afternoon Reg and Ruth introduced us to a huge raised bog that covers the centre of Cape Sable Island. We examined the rich mat of vegetation covering the area and found a variety of nice plants, from Bog Rosemary, Pitcher Plant, *Arethusa* (Dragon's-mouth), and sundews to Bunchberry, Swamp Laurel, and Labrador Tea plus many others. It is



a shame that the ATV riders who have torn up much of the area are not aware of what damage their vehicles do. There were many lanes of ruts with nothing left but wet peat. It appears that the damage does not heal quickly, and once one lane is impassible they create a new lane. The area is now the property of Nova Scotia and belongs to all of us.

Sunday morning was foggy in Barrington Passage, but some of us went birding along the Barrington railbed trail. Participants gathered at Papa's Steakhouse for a hearty breakfast, followed by the Nature Nova Scotia annual general meeting. As president, I chaired the meeting. This year only two offices had to be filled: Doug Linzey continues as secretary, and Sue Abbot agreed to be vice-president. Jean Gibson Collins, treasurer, reported that the Nature Canada conference of August 2007 was a financial success and NNS actually came away with a little money from hosting it. Members voted to donate \$500 of the surplus to

the Green Dragon Nature Youth Camps in recognition of the help the Blomidon Naturalists Society members gave at the conference.

Currently, Voluntary Planning is soliciting input for a new strategy for the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, and all were urged to attend the public meetings and submit written statements. It is our chance to ask for policies that will produce a Nova Scotia with a healthier natural history. The areas for comment are biodiversity, mining, parks, and forestry.

We thanked Lillian Perry and others for hosting the meeting. It was a pleasure to meet the naturalists of the area and see their natural environment. Lillian mentioned that there may be a naturalist club forming in the Barrington region; this would be good and welcome news indeed.

The meeting ended at noon, and members said their goodbyes and headed for the afternoon field trips. The choices were exploration of history and natural history near Sand Hills Beach Provincial Park, birding on Cape Sable Island, or birding up the Clyde River. I went up the Clyde River with Joan Czapalay to see the habitats in her MBBA (atlas) squares. We drove up the road beside the river, frequently stopping to listen and look for evidence of breeding birds.

The area is popular for recreation on and by the river. Cottages line the road for many kilometres. It is a beautiful river and I hope to go back with my kayak and explore. The highlight of the trip was an hour's walk across sand "barrens" to the river. Along the way we had many woodland birds, but the highlight was an Olive-sided Flycatcher and several nighthawks. The latter swooped down near treetops, and we could hear the whoosh of their wings.

The trip looped to Upper Clyde River and back down to Shelburne. In the middle of the forest (mostly cut over) was a lone strawberry farm at Middle Clyde River. At the point



where we crossed the river is a spot to canoe up the river to the wilderness areas to the north. From Shelburne it was a long three-hour drive back to the Valley. Well worth it for the weekend of natural history in a new region of Nova Scotia.

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YOUNG NATURALISTS

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## *Green Dragon*

### *Young Naturalist Program*

by Harold Forsyth

Plans for our Young Naturalist Program are well underway for the fourth year now. Once again we will partner with local community recreation departments and daycares to introduce hundreds of kids to nature. Bus trips to Blomidon Provincial Park, Smileys Provincial Park, and Blue Beach for fossil hunting will be the main focus over the summer. Our goal is to leave no kid inside. In addition, this summer, our Nature Nurd, Charlane Bishop, and artist and printmaker Rachel Reeve, in partnership with the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens, will be offering a weeklong camp, The Art of Nature. Kids will spend time exploring forest, stream, pond, and garden while leaf-printing, sketching, sculpting, papermaking, and photographing.

Generous sponsorship for our program has been provided by Shell Environmental Fund (\$5,000), TD Friends of the Environment (\$3,500), Canada Summer Jobs (\$3,600), Nature Nova Scotia (\$500), and our own Blomidon Naturalists. Any other donations to the program would be greatly appreciated, and Ed Sulis, our treasurer, will be pleased to send a tax-deductible receipt.

## *Wolfville-area Birds*

by Jim Wolford

**A**PRIL 27, 2008 – Some 30 participants, from as far away as Yarmouth, Truro, and Halifax attended on this sunny and warm day. Pretty good turn-out considering the price of gasoline was up to \$1.33/L. Highlights of the day included

- *Wolfville Harbour*: 5 Greater Yellowlegs (nice start, but no willets on the exposed mud).
- *Starrs Point*: Judy and Richard spotted a perched, then flying, Merlin where I stopped to view an occupied Red-tailed Hawk nest close to a barn. At Van Nostrand's Ponds, a nice coincidence was meeting Neil Van Nostrand (Neil used to live there and is the namesake of the ponds).
- *Van Nostrand's Ponds*: 2+ Tree Swallows, grackles, male Red-winged Blackbirds (no females yet), 10 Green-winged Teal, 2 Blue-winged Teal (Richard got one lovely photo of the flying teals showing both species' wing patches), 4 Mallards, 2+ Palm Warblers, 2+ Yellow-rumped Warblers. A Leopard Frog was calling/snoring, a bit like a slowly drumming woodpecker, and we heard a few Spring Peepers.
- *Canard River*: 2 American Black Ducks (ordinarily not remarkable, but we didn't see many today – 10 or less).
- *Lower Canard*: We stopped at the managed Muskrat Farm Marsh to view the new, replacement Bald Eagle nest and were delighted to see 2 tiny, downy eaglets with the adult; the other parent landed nearby while we watched. Some of the group saw and heard Evening Grosbeaks. Like last year, we thankfully used the nearby home of Helen & Fred Archibald for a pit stop and rest for an hour, where we heard and saw singing Purple Finches, chorusing Red-winged Blackbirds, a

Downy Woodpecker excavating a cavity, House Sparrows investigating other cavities, grackles chasing a crow, etc.

- *Harris Pond, Canning*: 5 Ring-necked Ducks (3m/2f), 2 American Wigeon (m/f), 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler, a soaring Red-tailed Hawk. Richard scoped a distant Swamp Sparrow while viewing interacting Downy Woodpeckers. And at least 5 Painted Turtles were basking in the warm sunlight. We also saw a white butterfly (probably a Cabbage White).
- *Fred Thomas Rd (Canard area)*: The large manure pile had 3 immature Bald Eagles and 10+ ravens (latter probably non-breeding yearlings); nearby were 500+ mixed gulls, but no detectable Lesser Black-backed Gull among them.
- *Canard Pond*: a flying Double-crested Cormorant, a male Northern Shoveler, 3 pairs of American Wigeon, 20 Green-winged Teal, a few Mallards & Black Ducks, and a Belted Kingfisher.
- *Saxon St Pond*: A diving, then skulking, Pied-billed Grebe, about 10 Green-winged Teal, and a Red-tailed Hawk on a nest.
- *New Minas Ducks Unlimited Pond (next to Cornwallis River)*: The only Canada Goose seen all day was on the island and presumably on a nest (the mate was nowhere to be seen). We also saw a Belted Kingfisher, and Clarence Stevens spotted 2 imm Iceland Gulls.
- *Port Williams sewage ponds*: Clarence spotted an early Barn Swallow with a dozen Tree Swallows.

Clarence listed about 40 bird species for the day.

I checked a couple more Bald Eagle nests by myself. The Noggins Farm Market nest at Greenwich shows at least one tiny eaglet, and while I watched one adult feeding it, the other flew in with a foot-full of grassy-looking nest-lining material.

At a new eagle nest at the west end of Wolfville, I was unable to detect the presence of an adult (but viewing this one is very difficult, and I will continue to watch it from time to time). We think this was built by a pair that is nesting for the first time, and thus it is well behind the “pros” for timing.

## *Blomidon Provincial Park – 'Parks Are for People' Walk*

by Jim Wolford

MAY 25, 2008 – Beautiful day, sunny, warm, nearly wind-free, black flies not hugely abundant. Only seven participants, including Pat Hawes (my “assistant” and equipment carrier and navigator) and myself.

Three of us viewed the Bald Eagle nest along the road and cliff a couple of kilometres south of the park. Visible in the nest was one small eaglet, but no adult. A crow perched in a nearby tree caused me to worry a bit, hopefully needlessly.

Floral observations during the 1-km walk to the woodland pond included Red Trilliums in bloom, baneberry in bloom, tall fiddleheads of Ostrich Fern (same for Christmas and Lady Ferns, but new fronds not up yet for spinulose/wood fern), lots of colonies of Wild Leek (foliage only), Hobblebush in bloom, American Fly-honeysuckle in bloom still, *Clintonia* just starting to bloom, False Solomon’s-seal with flower buds, alder (*Alnus crispa*) in bloom, Sugar Maple in bloom, and dewberry (or trailing raspberry) in bloom.

Black flies were present but neither overly abundant nor biting much. Murray Colbo (an expert on these flies) caught and showed us a specimen of a separate genus of black fly that transforms into an adult before winter, then overwinters before biting in spring.

When we came to the woodland pond that has no inlet or outlet, Murray was a mine of information. He and I used the dip net and enamel pan to show the abundant life forms in the water, which I will just list here for brevity:



RICHARD STERN

*Jim Wolford (right) and field trip participants at Blomidon Provincial Park*

- a small black planarian or flatworm
- a small, skinny freshwater earthworm cousin, an oligochaete worm
- a snail
- lots of adult and egg-sac-bearing Fairy Shrimps (these are quite special, occurring nearly nowhere else in Nova Scotia and a major reason for this annual late-May walk – their life cycle ends and begins now as the adults die soon and their eggs are left to perhaps dry out as the water level drops, the eggs overwinter until they are flooded in spring by melt water, hatch into tiny larvae, and grow into adults again ...)
- one tiny crustacean, perhaps an ostracod or seed-shrimp
- red water mites (the colour perhaps advertises a nasty taste)
- small damselfly larvae
- water striders
- caddisfly larvae (2 kinds in cases made of bits of vegetation: a “naked” one and a mucus-net maker to capture food)
- mosquito larvae (wrigglers) and pupae (tumbler)
- phantom midge larvae
- midge/bloodworm pupa (red pigment has affinity for oxygen, like hemoglobin)

- whirligig beetle adults (and Murray and I differ about whether we saw a larva, too)
- a medium-sized predaceous diving-beetle adult, and a possible larva from this family of beetles)
- one small, slow diving beetle
- only a few frog tadpoles (probably Wood Frog)
- nice chorus of adult spring peepers heard across the pond from us
- a single bunch of well-developed eggs of Yellow-spotted Salamander, which will hatch in a week or less – and the clump was obvious at the water surface by the chartreuse colour of symbiotic algae in the egg envelopes

Mammals included red squirrels and an eastern chipmunk.

We heard and saw quite a few birds, since our day was so wind-free and the leafing-out of the trees was unadvanced compared with the Valley below. Our list included Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, hummingbird, raven, robin, Black-throated Green Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Ovenbird, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Redstart, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren.

Richard Stern had an MP3 player with which he could select and play calls of various species, to be used to teach us the songs and to use them as possible attractants. He stressed that the use of recordings should always be minimized when employed, to reduce disturbance.

## *Search for New BNS President*

Our Annual General Meeting will be held during the regular October meeting, at which time we have to fill one vacant position, that of president, ably held for three years by John Harwood. Past-president

Liz Vermeulen will also be leaving us, as John automatically assumes that post.

John Belbin (684-0862), Jean Gibson Collins (678-4725), and Darrell Slauenwhite (684-0430) are the search committee. If you have ideas about who would make a good candidate for president, please let one of them know. [What the Search Committee did not know when they so quickly took on this task is that if they fail to find a president by the October meeting, they will have to draw straws for the position: short straw wins. Did we tell you that the president must have a good sense of humour?] ]

The presidency is not a difficult job, mostly PR work, as the very able executive and committee heads are on hand to help with various tasks.

A volunteer would be great. Live the life of a pampered “Riley” and be the top dog of one of the oldest and most prestigious natural history societies in Nova Scotia. It will look really good on your resume. It would make life so much simpler for the search committee members, too. Please contact any one of them soon.

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NATURAL HISTORY

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## *Nature Counts – Update*

by Emily Laing

Another successful year of the Nature Counts program is underway at the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens. We began on May 6 and will continue to meet each Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 8 p.m. until August 26. A lot of newcomers have joined us this year, including the members of a 4-H club and several community members new to the area. However, we are always looking for new participants to help, so please feel

free to join us. So far this year we have recorded blooms for 152 plants, 2 fungi, and 14 trees. There have also been 19 bird sightings.

This year we have also partnered with the Blomidon Naturalists Society for The Art of Nature – a workshop for children ages 8–12 that will run from July 28 to August 1. Participants will spend a week exploring nature while listening, looking, sketching, writing, and creating art. All creations will be inspired by plants and animals on the trails and in the gardens. Charlane Bishop and Rachel Reeve are leading the program.

Alana MacDonald and I are very thankful for our involvement with the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens and also with BNS. Our summer positions as environmental educators have already been so exciting and rewarding. Please come visit us at the Irving Centre, or join us on Tuesday evenings for Nature Counts.

*You can contact Emily and Alana at the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre by e-mail (o83969m@acadiu.ca or o64042l@acadiu.ca) or telephone (680-5204).*



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## *A Fishy Story with a Twist*

by Judy Tufts

It began with a group of old high school friends reuniting for their annual fishing weekend on a lake on the Eastern Shore. The weather was uncooperative, which meant little fishing took place, but when the skies cleared by noon on their final day, they eagerly grabbed their fishing gear and headed for the boat.

My son was in the boat with two others, sitting in the bow with his half-grown Labrador pup at his feet. Shortly after they set out, my son caught a fair-sized trout – the first of the outing thus far – then hooked it onto an attached, floating chain that trailed through the water while fishing lines continued to dip in and out of the water with no success. All of a sudden there was a yelp from the stern: “There’s a dinosaur attacking your fish!” My son laughed and without turning around said, “I think you’ve been celebrating too much.” “No, no!” said his friend. “Look.” With that, they all looked at the trailing chain and saw a very large Snapping Turtle (yes, it did rather look like a “dinosaur”) with its jaws around that solitary trout, trying to free it from the chain. Somehow, they managed to rescue the fish with a little perseverance. The impressive marks left on the trout showed the size of the turtle’s jaw.

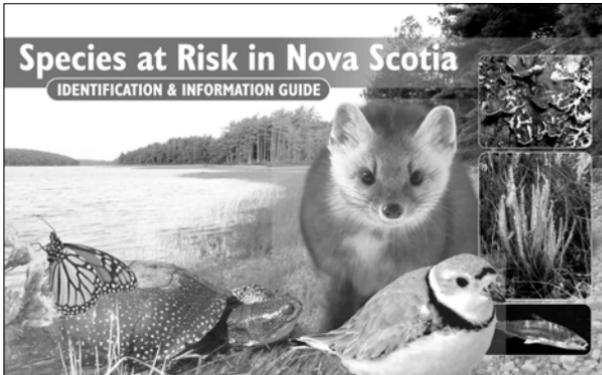
The turtle departed, no doubt unhappy about this missed free meal. The fishing party remained in awe of its massive size and said the front paw was the size of a large man’s hand. A memorable experience and great encounter with a creature from the wild. And yes, the group did manage to catch a few more trout without the hungry turtle checking them out.

## *Species at Risk Guide*

As those of you who were at the June 16 meeting know, this new and very-well-produced book by Brennan Caverhill and Megan Crowley is now available. You can get your own copy of *Species at Risk in Nova Scotia Identification & Information Guide* free of charge. It's not for sale, but is available for personal use (in pdf format) at the website [www.speciesatrisk.ca/SARGuide](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/SARGuide). From this site you can download and view or print the whole book or the individual sections for each of 42 species separately.

The book is available only on line because the information on, and status of, species are always changing. This way, the book can easily be kept up to date.

*Thanks to Ruth Newell, curator, E.C. Smith Herbarium, Acadia University, for this information. Visit <http://herbarium.acadiau.ca>*



## *The Harwood Yard*

by Jim Wolford

JUNE 7, 2008, WOODSIDE – Only six naturalists attended this first of a series of walks in yards of BNS members. It was a nice calm and warm day.

Avril and John Harwood's property is 16 acres, all north of Woodside Road and sloping up toward the North Mountain, with a view of the Valley to the south. Around the house is a lawn nicely landscaped with various flowering plants, including a flowering dogwood tree, spiderwort, and highbush cranberry.

Most of the property is mixed forest, with a nice variety of medium-sized and larger trees, lots of dead wood standing and lying (a healthy sign), and a variety of native ferns. There is an open wet meadow that John calls his marsh.

I collected some specimens of unknown fungi on the trunk of a dead spruce (probably White Spruce killed by the spruce beetle *Dendroctonus rufipennis*) that still had its bark – there were over a hundred of them scattered on the bark – and later had Nancy Nickerson identify them. These small puffball-like mushrooms turned out to be Veiled Polypores (*Cryptoporus volvatus*). Nancy tells me she found the first documented specimens for Nova Scotia last year in Smileys Provincial Park and then this year found some in west Kentville in Palmeters Woods.

We heard and saw birds, including Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos, Redstart, Ovenbird, and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Red Squirrels and chipmunks are abundant in and around the yard.

At one point Bernard asked about ticks on the property, and the Harwoods reported that this year they did find one (presumably a dog or wood tick) on a dog.



DOUG LINZEY

*The Harwood yard, Woodside Road, North Mountain*

In a small pond a bit west of the Harwood house were several submerged clumps of Yellow-spotted Salamander eggs. Using a dip-net and plastic pan, I examined one greenish clump of eggs at the water surface, and the small salamander larvae were just at the hatching stage. I liberated several by handling the loose slime/mucus surrounding the eggs, each of which had the symbiotic algae in the egg envelope. By symbiotic, I mean that the algae provide oxygen for the salamanderlets, while the algae benefit from protection by the slime coating the eggs, plus perhaps gaining from the nutrients/minerals in the wastes of the developing salamanderlets.

A few sweeps of my dip-net surprisingly caught almost nothing in the pond water – only a couple of mayfly larvae.

The Harwoods extend an open invitation to naturalists to visit and explore their property. Directions are in our Spring 2008 newsletter, and their phone number is 582-3320.

## *Cloud Lake*

by Andrew Steeves

MAY 3, 2008 – I only just recently joined BNS, something I’ve long considered but which an aversion to organizational life had prevented me from doing. For a number of reasons, this spring I decided that it was time to put these aversions aside and get involved, and I have not regretted it. When I filled out the membership form, I noted that one of my interests is canoeing. Like Ratty in *The Wind in the Willows*, I have always felt that “there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.” This is a conviction I have held since childhood, when my father brought home a reel-to-reel projector and a couple of Bill Mason’s wilderness canoeing films and projected them on the living-room wall.

A few days after I joined BNS I got an email from Patrick Kelly inviting me to join the expedition to the Cloud Lake Wilderness Area. I had read reports about previous trips in this newsletter and was curious to see this area for myself. I told Patrick I was interested and marked the date on the calendar on our refrigerator.

On the morning of the outing my crew (my son Adam, my business partner Gary, and his son Nick) left Wolfville at 8:00 a.m. and met up with Patrick Kelly, Larry Bogan, and the other paddlers in South Berwick. Thirteen people came out, shipping in five canoes and two solo kayaks. After some brief introductions in the Avery’s parking lot, we piled back into our vehicles and headed out.

Cloud Lake is accessed by a well-constructed logging road that leaves Torbrook Road. Part way out that logging road we stopped where a small bridge crosses the upper reaches of Fales River. Larry told me that if you followed the stillwater upstream it would eventually come to a



PATRICK KELLY

*A fire, a spot of lunch, and conversation during the Cloud Lake outing*

small woodland lake named East Allen. There was evidence of beavers at work below the bridge. Yellow-rumped Warblers and song sparrows were fluttering around the stillwater and I could hear Ruffed Grouse drumming up deeper in the woods. It was a pleasant spot, and I have to admit that I was tempted to forget Cloud Lake altogether and put in here to explore the stillwater.

It was cool and overcast when we arrived to the lake, but there was no wind to speak of. Gary and I decided to put the boys together in their own canoe and leave them to their own devices. The boys (ages 12 and 14) made out just fine. They kept up with the pack and were chatting it up with everyone. Sometimes they made a terrible racket with their youthful goofiness, but no one seemed to mind. I'd been worried about this. Sometimes people who are interested in "nature" get upset when kids are present and are acting, well, "naturally." The kindness the others on this trip showed the boys was heartening and increased my already high opinion of the Blomidon Naturalists.

The portage to Frog Lake was not to be part of this trip. Initially, I was disappointed, but there was no shortage of territory to explore on Cloud Lake. As the group moved clockwise around the lake, Gary and I hung back, wandering into all the little coves and inlets to explore. There were a pair of loons on the lake, and we saw what looked like nesting platforms made of pallets here and there along the shore. We drifted for a while listening to Pileated Woodpeckers and looking at Black Spruce, Red Pine and Rock Tripe. (Gary has a degree in forestry, so we tend to talk as much about shrubs and trees as animals and birds when we travel the woods together.)

We stopped for lunch at the northeast corner of the lake at a second launch site. Gary and I spotted our first mayflowers of the season where we landed. Dry tinder was easily gathered from the underbrush and we got a nice fire going, which warmed and cheered everyone over the lunch break. By the time we were back out on the water, there were patches of blue sky appearing overhead and the sun was warming things up.

In the afternoon, there were more Yellow-rumped Warblers, chickadees, ravens, Song Sparrows and Swamp Sparrows. Moving southerly along the eastern shore, we saw many large White Birch felled by beavers and a massive beaver lodge, but no sign of a food pile or of recent cuttings. When we reached the takeout for the carry to Frog Lake, some of us walked across for a quick look while others stayed and messed about in their boats. The carry is about 500 m long, proceeding through a wet area and then climbing over low ridge. Other than the wet beginning, the path is excellent. We saw more mayflowers and Pitcher Plants along the trail, as well as a wide variety of lichen and sphagnum. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was heard and then spotted up in the treetops.

Back in our canoes again, we proceeded up the west side of the lake, watching for birds and investigating interesting features in the shoreline. Patrick Kelly spent most of the trip reclined amidship in his canoe 'atlasing' and taking pictures while his two female shipmates conveyed him gently along like a visiting dignitary. Swinging wide into a small inlet to look at some abandoned beaver workings, Gary and I flushed a



*Paddling past a large beaver lodge on the eastern shore of Cloud Lake*

pair of common mergansers out into the open where Patrick got a good photo of the male.

As we approached the end of our circumnavigation, Gary and I verred-off one more time to explore a beaver canal in a swampy little floodplain. As we were backing out to the lake again, we spotted a good sized Eastern Painted Turtle sunning itself on a log along the edge of the lake, our first turtle sighting of the season. When we rejoined the group again at the landing, the boys had convinced their new friends to let them try out the kayaks and were paddling along happily. I told Patrick about the turtle, and he said that they had not yet seen a turtle on any of their trips to this lake. I figure that we paddled about 12 km all told.

## *Some Impressions of the Far South Atlantic*

by Roy Bishop

My wife and I spent much of March on a small cruise ship, *Corinthian II*, on an 8,000-km voyage from Ushuaia to Cape Town, with four Zodiac landings in the Falkland Islands, five more in South Georgia. We passed by three other islands – Nightingale, Inaccessible, and Tristan da Cunha – while en route to South Africa. Less than two years ago, these were places we neither planned to visit nor ever expected to see. Also unexpected, the trip was offered to us all expenses paid, for I had been invited as a guest lecturer.

Among my lasting impressions of the far South Atlantic:

1. Remoteness: For three weeks we did not see an airplane, not even a distant jet trail. Other than at Ushuaia and Stanley, only once did we see another ship, a British supply ship at Tristan da Cunha. Much of the time we were far from shipping lanes, beyond the range of any land-based helicopter, and several days from possible help by another ship.
2. The bleak, treeless, grassy hills of the multitude of islands that make up the Falklands, and the richness of the bird life on those wind-swept isles.
3. The astounding beauty of South Georgia. Its beauty is two-fold: the incredible numbers of marine birds and mammals that breed on its shores, and the splendour of its topography. South Georgia is a 180-km-long crescent of towering alpine peaks rising out of the sea, many partially buried under ice caps and draped with glaciers.
4. The behaviour of the birds and mammals. They treated us as just



ROY BISHOP

### *King Penguins*

another animal – without fear, occasionally with curiosity, but more often than not, they simply ignored us. I recall a raptor, a magnificent, rare Striated Caracara, that totally ignored me as I took its photo from a metre away; a King Penguin that probed my boot with its beak; a Tussock Bird that was difficult to photograph because it kept walking up to me; and a 300-pound male Antarctic Fur Seal that gave me a puzzled look and went around me when I did not stand up and move out of his way as he shuffled along a beach.

5. The effortless flight of the albatross. Black-browed, Royal, Wandering, Yellow-nosed, ... all are masters of the air, totally at home soaring over the waves of a wind-whipped sea. Wandering Albatross and Royal Albatross are particularly impressive for they have the greatest wingspan of any bird, 3 to 3.5 m, or about 11 feet. Yet their wings are so narrow and thin, one marvels how they can be constructed of flesh and bone. And to think that recently a Wandering Albatross carrying a tiny transmitter was tracked by satellite over 33,000 km in 71 days!
6. Late one afternoon, in a fjord at the southeastern end of South Georgia, gale-force winds shrieked down the glacier at the head of the

fjord, turning the surface of the sea white and ripping spray from the crests of waves. In that maelstrom, fluttering along and dipping their feet into the water between fragments of ice were the smallest of pelagic birds, Wilson's Storm-Petrels, at home in an environment where a human would expire in minutes.

7. Ice, great masses of it, on land in South Georgia and in the surrounding sea. Icebergs are impressive, whether glistening in sunlight on the distant horizon, or barely visible as a whiter form looming through fog. I was uneasy on the nights the ship sped through Antarctic waters. I was not worried about icebergs, for they return a strong radar signal. I was worried about growlers, fragments of icebergs, their weak radar echoes indistinguishable from the clutter of echoes from waves, yet massive and hard enough to hole the ship. On those nights, two brilliant searchlights illuminated the sea beyond the bow. I fell asleep hoping that a good lookout was being kept on the bridge.

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WEATHER

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## *Eastern Annapolis Valley Weather*

### *Spring 2008*

by Larry Bogan, Cambridge Station, NS

From the table (page 41), you will note that, apart from being 15 percent sunnier than average, the 2008 spring season was pretty normal. May was an average month.

April was the outstanding month of the season this year. The mean temperature was 1.8°C above average, rainfall was only two-thirds of the expected amount, and there was one-third more bright sunshine

|                                   | Temperature    |                |                | Precipitation |                  | Bright Sunshine |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                                   | Max<br>(°C)    | Min<br>(°C)    | Mean<br>(°C)   | Total<br>(mm) | Snowfall<br>(cm) | (h)             |
| <b>March</b><br>(47 yr. average)  | 3.0<br>(3.4)   | -6.5<br>(-5.2) | -1.8<br>(-0.9) | 114<br>(104)  | 31<br>(42)       | 137<br>(133)    |
| <b>April</b><br>(47 yr. average)  | 12.0<br>(9.2)  | 0.8<br>(0.0)   | 6.4<br>(4.6)   | 57<br>(84)    | 1<br>(13)        | 210<br>(152)    |
| <b>May</b><br>(47 yr. average)    | 16.3<br>(16.2) | 5.3<br>(5.0)   | 10.8<br>(10.6) | 94<br>(80)    | 0<br>(0)         | 201<br>(191)    |
| <b>Season</b><br>(47 yr. average) | 10.4<br>(9.6)  | -0.1<br>(-0.1) | 5.1<br>(4.8)   | 265<br>(268)  | 32<br>(55)       | 548<br>(476)    |

Source: Food & Horticultural Research Centre, Kentville, NS

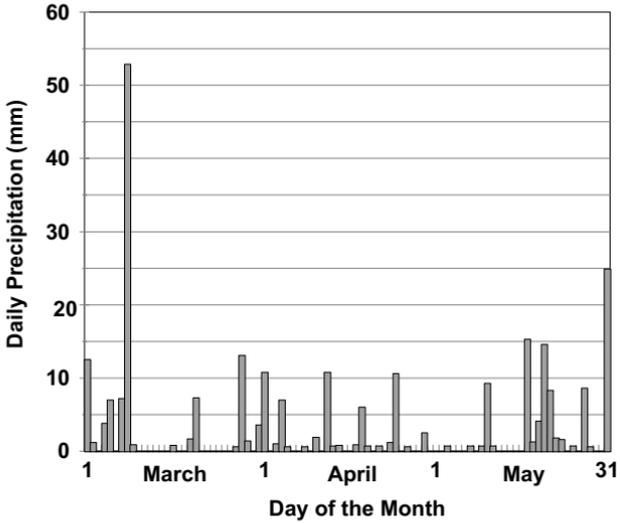
than usual. For a particularly nice period in the middle of the month (April 16–23), six days got above 15°C and five had more than ten hours of bright sunshine.

March was a cool month, with the mean temperature about 1°C below average. As you can see in the daily temperature chart, temperatures averaged around -3°C for March and then quickly warmed in the first week of April to above the 5°C level. From then on the temperature very slowly rose in April and May. April's excess warmth balanced out March's coolness to yield the average spring season.

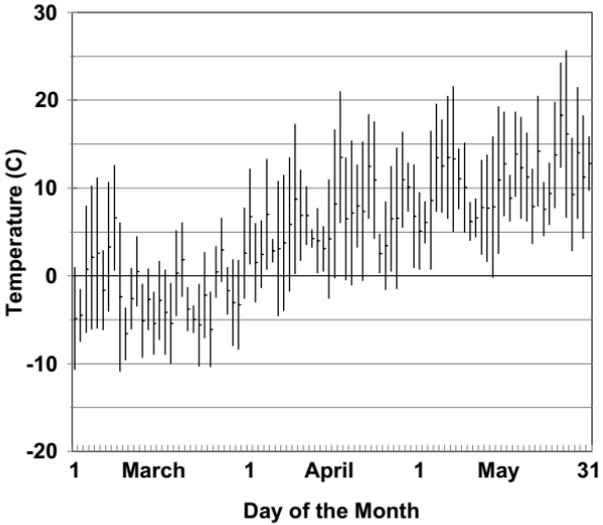
The precipitation was nicely distributed throughout the season, with more in March and May. After we lost the 15 cm of snow cover that had fallen on March 4, the snow cover stayed at about 6 cm for the rest of the month. We kept our blanket of snow into the first week of April, when it all disappeared suddenly on 6th. The season started warming then.

All in all, after the snow left the ground, we had a pleasant spring.

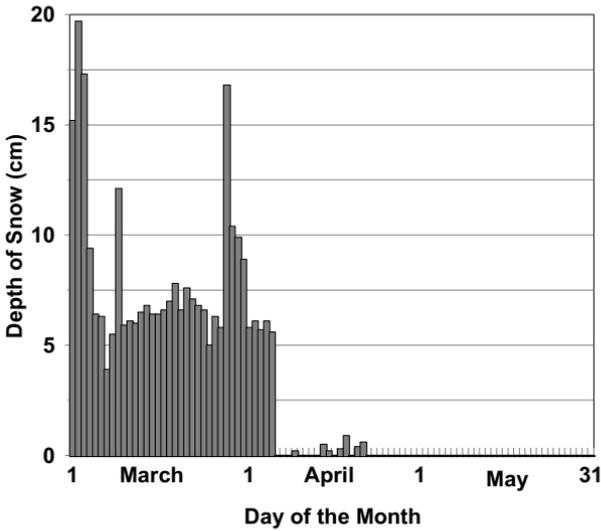
**Daily Precipitation Mar, Apr, May 2008  
Kentville, Nova Scotia**



**Daily Temperatures -Mar, Apr, May 2008  
Kentville, Nova Scotia**



Snow on the Ground -Mar, Apr, May 2008  
Kentville, Nova Scotia



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ASTRONOMY

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## *What's In The Sky?*

by Roy Bishop

Venus moves slowly out from behind the Sun into the evening twilight during the summer. However, it remains low in the western sky until autumn, when it will begin to dominate the sky as “the evening star.”

Mars passes the bright star Regulus on June 30 and is close to Saturn on July 10 in the evening twilight. Mars vanishes from the night sky by September and passes behind the Sun on December 5.

Jupiter is at opposition on July 9. At that point the giant planet rises in the southeast near sunset and is in the southern part of the sky all

night long. However, Jupiter lies well south of the celestial equator this year, keeping it low in our sky and making good telescopic views of the large planet difficult.

Saturn drops into the evening twilight during July, vanishing from sight in August and passing behind the Sun on September 4. (See Mars above.)

#### SPECIAL EVENTS IN SEQUENCE

**June 20** 21:00 ADT, summer begins, and the amount of daylight begins to decrease as next winter approaches.

**June 29** Tomorrow morning, June 30, from about 3:00 to 4:15 a.m. the waning crescent Moon passes in front of the Pleiades star cluster. Viewed in a small telescope or binoculars (preferably mounted on a tripod), the sight of the Moon drifting slowly across the stars of the Pleiades is a sublime celestial sight. As the Moon passes, the stars wink out and later suddenly appear, one by one. You will need a clear sky and a very low horizon (no trees or hills toward the east-northeast), for the Moon and Pleiades will be very low, particularly around 3 a.m.

**June 30** (See the Mars note above)

**July 2** New Moon and a fairly close perigee, resulting in large tides on July 4 and 5.

**July 4** Aphelion: Earth furthest from Sun during 2008.

**July 9** (See the Jupiter note above)

**July 10** (See the Mars note above)

**July 31** Tomorrow morning's sunrise (August 1) will be a rare sight. The Sun will come into view looking like a cookie with a large bite taken out of it. The missing part of the solar disk will be hidden behind the Moon

– a partial solar eclipse. As seen from a narrow track crossing parts of Canada’s Victoria, Prince of Wales, Somerset, Devon, and Ellesmere islands, the eclipse is total. The narrow path of totality then sweeps eastward across northern Greenland, the Barents Sea, across Siberia, and ends at sunset in China. The last partial solar eclipse visible from Nova Scotia was 9 years ago, August 11, 1999, and it too occurred at sunrise. There was a more recent solar eclipse on Christmas Day 2000, but clouds and snow hid it. After August 1, the next partial solar eclipse visible from our area is over five years away, on November 3, 2013.

To see the unusual sunrise on August 1 you will have to be up and ready by 6:00 a.m., for the eclipse ends at 6:24 a.m. Also, you will need a proper solar filter (such as a no. 14 welder’s glass) to avoid damaging your eyes. For advice on such matters, give one of the “Astronomy” people a call (see the back pages of this newsletter).

**August 11 & 12** Only the brighter meteors of the Perseid meteor shower will be visible this year because of the light of the waxing gibbous Moon.

**August 30** This is the day for the public at Nova East, Atlantic Canada’s largest star party, held each year at Smileys Provincial Park near Windsor. Everyone, adult or child, is welcome. For more information, see the website: <http://halifax.rasc.ca/ne/>.



# SOURCES OF LOCAL NATURAL HISTORY

Compiled by the Blomidon Naturalists Society

| TOPIC   | SOURCE                                | OFFICE OR HOME TELEPHONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Amphibians<br/>&amp; Reptiles</b>          | Sherman Bleakney                      | H: 542-3604              |
|   | Jim Wolford                           | H: 542-9204              |
| <b>Astronomy</b>                              | Roy Bishop                            | H: 542-3992              |
|   | Sherman Williams                      | H: 542-5104              |
|   | Larry Bogan                           | H: 678-0446              |
| <b>Birds – General</b>                        | Bernard Forsythe                      | H: 542-2427              |
|   | Richard Stern                         | O: 678-4742 H: 678-1975  |
|   | Gordon & Judy Tufts                   | H: 542-7800              |
|   | Jim Wolford                           | H: 542-9204              |
|   | Jean Timpa                            | H: 542-5678              |
| <b>Butterflies &amp; Moths</b>                | Jean Timpa                            | H: 542-5678              |
| <b>Fish &amp; Wildlife</b>                    | NS Department of<br>Natural Resources | O: 679-6091              |
| <b>Flora: <i>General<br/>Fungi</i></b>        | Ruth Newell                           | O: 585-1355 H: 542-2095  |
|   | Nancy Nickerson                       | O: 679-5333 H: 542-9332  |
| <b>Hawks &amp; Owls</b>                       | Bernard Forsythe                      | H: 542-2427              |
| <b>Indian Prehistory<br/>&amp; Archeology</b> | James Legge                           | H: 542-3530              |
| <b>Mosses &amp; Ferns</b>                     | Ruth Newell                           | O: 585-1355 H: 542-2095  |
| <b>Mammals</b>                                | Tom Herman                            | O: 585-1358 H: 678-0383  |
| <b>Rocks &amp; Fossils</b>                    | Geology Dept.,<br>Acadia University   | O: 585-2201              |
| <b>Seashore<br/>&amp; Marine Life</b>         | Sherman Bleakney                      | H: 542-3604              |
|   | Jim Wolford                           | H: 542-9204              |
|   | Michael Brylinsky                     | O: 585-1509 H: 582-7954  |

# BLOMIDON NATURALISTS SOCIETY

## 2008 Membership Fees & Order Form

Members of the Blomidon Naturalists Society receive four issues of the BNS newsletter annually. As a registered charity, BNS issues receipts for all donations. Members may also join Nature Nova Scotia through BNS and will receive FNSN News, the federation newsletter. (Neither BNS nor NNS membership is tax deductible.)

| No.   | Membership classification               | Price   | Total   |
|-------|---|---------|---------|
| _____ | Individual adult                        | \$20.00 | \$_____ |
| _____ | Family (number of family members _____) | \$20.00 | \$_____ |
| _____ | Junior (under 16 years)                 | \$1.00  | \$_____ |
| _____ | Nature Nova Scotia membership           | \$5.00  | \$_____ |

### Items for Purchase

|       |  |         |         |
|-------|--|---------|---------|
| _____ | 2008 BNS calendar                            | \$15.00 | \$_____ |
| _____ | Natural History of Kings County              | \$14.00 | \$_____ |
| _____ | Nature Walks: Within the View of Blomidon    | \$20.00 | \$_____ |
| _____ | Annotated checklist of Kings County birds    | \$5.00  | \$_____ |
| _____ | Blomidon Naturalist crest                    | \$5.00  | \$_____ |
| _____ | Blomidon Naturalist hat                      | \$15.00 | \$_____ |
| _____ | Screensaver: 10 years of BNS calendar photos | \$10.00 | \$_____ |

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(Orders \$15 or less = \$3 \$16 to \$50 = \$6 over \$50 free)

**Tax-deductible donation** \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Name of donor (for gift subscription): \_\_\_\_\_

Membership fees are due January 1 of the current year. Please send cheques or money orders made out to Blomidon Naturalists Society in payment of membership fees and other purchases to:

**Ed Sulis, 107 Canaan Avenue, Kentville, NS B4N 2A7**





22nd of  
June  
ASH TREE  
BARK STRIPPED OFF by LIGHTNING