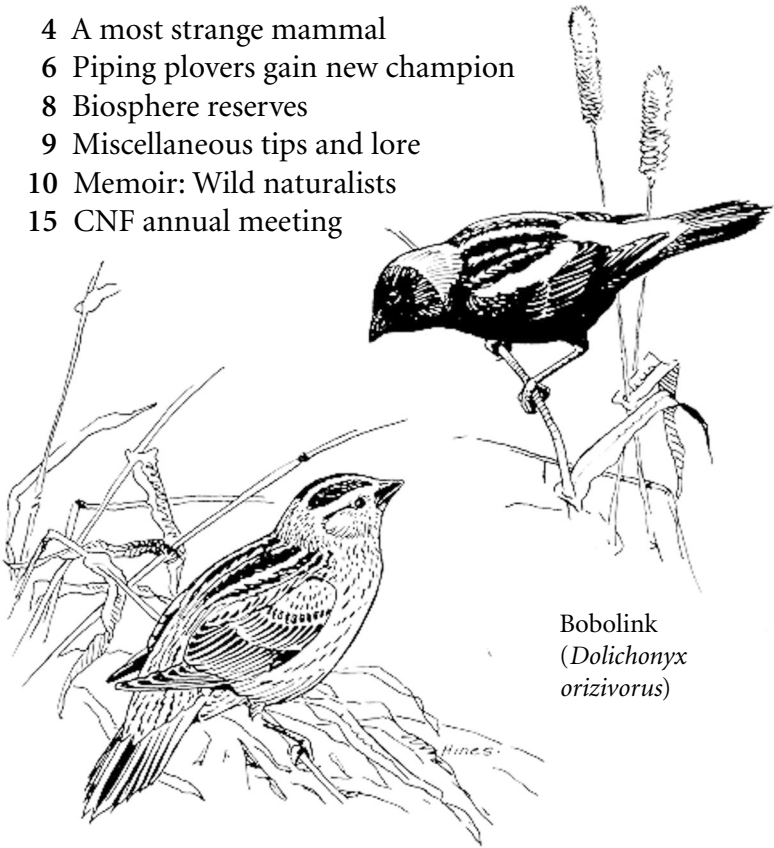


## Inside:

- 4 A most strange mammal
- 6 Piping plovers gain new champion
- 8 Biosphere reserves
- 9 Miscellaneous tips and lore
- 10 Memoir: Wild naturalists
- 15 CNF annual meeting



Bobolink  
(*Dolichonyx  
orizivorus*)

# Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (FNSN)

**Annapolis Field Naturalists' Society** (Rep: Jon Percy)

PO Box 576, Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0

**Blomidon Naturalists Society** (Rep: Larry Bogan)

PO Box 127, Wolfville, NS B0P 1X0

website: <http://www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/home.htm>

**Cape Breton Naturalists Society** (Rep: Betty & Rusty Gentile)

c/o Cape Breton Centre for Heritage and Science, 225 George St, Sydney, NS B1P 1J5

**Chignecto Naturalists Club** (Rep: Ken & Marge Nelson)

c/o CWS, Box 6227, Sackville, NB E4L 1G6

**Eastern Mainland Field Naturalists** (Rep: Randy Lauff)

c/o Department of Biology, St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS B2G 2W5

**Halifax Field Naturalists** (Rep: Doug Linzey)

c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St, Halifax, NS B3H 3A6

website: <http://chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/FieldNaturalists/fieldnat.html>

**Les Amis du Plein Air** (Rep: Eileen Rickard)

PO Box 472, Cheticamp, NS B0E 1H0

**Nova Scotia Bird Society** (Rep: Stirling Levy)

c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St, Halifax, NS B3H 3A6

**Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society** (Rep: Barry Sawyer)

c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St, Halifax, NS B3H 3A6

website: <http://csensen@fox.nstn.ns.ca>

**South Shore Naturalists Club** (Rep: Jill Comolli)

c/o Jill Comolli, RR1, Rose Bay, NS B0J 2X0

**Tusket River Environmental Protection Association** (Rep: Bernie Deveau)

c/o C. Jacquard, Box 8A, RR1, Tusket, NS B0W 3M0

**Members at large** (Reps: Mark Brennan, Elizabeth Kilvert)

Associate Member – **Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society**

471 Poplar St, Cole Harbour, NS B2W 4L2

The FNSN purpose is to further communication and cooperation among naturalists and natural history societies in Nova Scotia. We also work towards a coordinated effort on the provincial level to protect our natural environment.

• We promote the enjoyment and understanding of nature by our members and the general public through education via publications, lectures, symposia, field trips, and other activities; through fostering the creation of nature centres and education programs; and by defending the integrity of existing facilities and programs.

• We encourage the establishment of protected natural areas, as represented in parks, nature reserves, wilderness areas, heritage rivers, and other such protected areas.

• We defend the integrity of existing sanctuaries by exercising constant vigilance against pollution and habitat destruction.

• We promote and engage in funding and research needed for protecting the integrity of all natural ecosystems.

• We encourage and engage in the protection and restoration of threatened and endangered species, with special attention to the preserving essential habitats through: working for the inclusion of all major habitats in a system of protected areas; encouraging and facilitating the reintroduction of extirpated flora and fauna to their former ranges in the province; and encouraging and facilitating the restoration and enhancement of essential habitats.

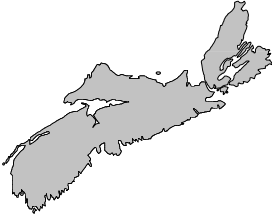
FNSN is affiliated with the Canadian Nature Federation.

Visit our website at <http://chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/FNSN/hp-fnsn.html>

or call Doug Linzey at (902) 684-0943 for more information.

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## From the editor

In our last issue, we mourned the passing (as in extinguishing, not legislating) of SARA, the federal endangered species bill. Now, with a return of the old government, it's back. There's still an opportunity to get your views on the new bill C-5 on record. The legislature's Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development is hearing from witnesses through the end of May (tentatively May 7 in Halifax).

Laura Telford is the Conservation Campaign coordinator for the Canadian Nature Federation. Her suggestions for helping out the Endangered Species Campaign include writing letters to the editor, telling your MP what you think, and generally stimulating awareness in others. The CNF website has plenty of links to Canadian endangered species information: <http://www.cnf.ca>.

With two separate campaigns to establish biosphere reserves in southern Nova Scotia, we'll be hearing a lot about both the concept and the particulars. We plan to devote some space in future issues to the progress of these two initiatives. Meanwhile, in this issue, we give a brief outline of what biosphere reserves are all about.

Driving from Halifax to the Valley one day this winter, I came close to choking on the salt being whipped up off the dry highway. It occurred to me that perhaps road salt is something to be concerned about – for the health of both humans and nature. Shortly afterward, a discussion began on NatureNS about the potential harm to vegetation, particularly eastern pine, adjacent to roads treated with salt. A little digging on the web and a couple of newspaper articles have persuaded me that the road salt issue is not going away and that it deserves our serious attention.

Please let us know if you have ideas on this issue or any other potential threats to the natural history of Nova Scotia.

# A most strange and fascinating mammal

The star-nosed mole (*Condylura cristata*) is certainly an exotic looking creature with those 22 pink rays sprouting from its snout. But it is common in most wetlands in Eastern Canada (Manitoba to Labrador) and the northeastern United States (Minnesota through northern Georgia). In fact, it is the only mole endemic to Nova Scotia. It's also the only mole that is semiaquatic. It builds a network of shallow tunnels in damp or muddy soil, some of which open directly into bodies of water. Its diet comprises aquatic insects, crustaceans, small fish, and earthworms. These habits enable the star-nosed mole to maintain normal foraging habits throughout the winter.

Star-nosed moles commonly raise a single litter of two to seven, born in a dry nest of vegetation between mid-April and mid-June. After about three weeks in the nest, the young are two-thirds grown and ready to forage on their own. They become sexually mature at ten months. Population density ranges from 2 to 10 per hectare in swamplands.



The all-black moles have dense waterproof fur that readily lays flat in either direction to allow free movement – forward or reverse – through narrow tunnels in the soil. They range in length from 15 to 21 cm, including a 5–8 cm tail. Because moles live underground in perpetual dark or dimly lit conditions, their senses of sight and hearing are secondary, and thus their eyes and ears are externally minimal.

The challenge for researchers has been to fathom the workings of the mole's primary sense organ – that “star” of constantly writhing tentacles at the end of its nose. The man who may be most on top of the situation is Ken Catania, a brain researcher at Vanderbilt University, who for years has been live-trapping star-nosed moles in the swamps of northwestern Pennsylvania. Before Catania began studying the peculiar appendage, a common speculation was that the rays contained electroreceptors, much like the platypus, which detects small electric fields surrounding its live prey underwater. However, on closer examination, he found none of the features common to electroreceptors. What he found instead were “goose bump-like structures called Eimer's organs” (Rankin 1997), which contain touch-sensitive clusters of nerves.

Apparently Eimer's organs are common to all moles and some other

related insectivores that depend on a keen sense of touch to find prey. The star-nosed mole, however, has more than 12 times as many Eimer's organs than other mole species. In fact, in collaboration with neuroscientist Jon Kaas at Vanderbilt, Catania found that "more than 100,000 nerve fibres run from the star to the brain – almost six times more than come from the touch receptors in a highly sensitive human hand."

In his research, Catania has photographed moles travelling down their tunnels, very rapidly sweeping everything with their tentacles. "As soon as they come in contact with prey – a worm or an insect – they snatch it up in a flash." Catania speculates that "a lot of things in a mole's environment probably have a distinctive texture at the microscopic level, and with one touch this animal knows exactly what it has touched." The question remains, though: Why, if this system of food detection so effective, is the star-nosed mole unique?

The answer probably lies in the mole's unique habitat. Whereas other mole species live mainly in drier (and more abrasive) soils, the star-nosed mole's moist and muddy tunnelling habits are much less wearing on its supersensitive snout. Catania has found that "the eastern mole, which often lives in dry soil, has actually evolved in the opposite direction of the star-nosed mole. Its Eimer's organs have degenerated to where they have fewer nerve endings." Speculating on why other moles don't have a star, Catania says, "Well, the fact is no other mole *could* have it."

In his continuing research, Catania has discovered that the mole's star develops "in a way unlike any other animal appendage" (Milius 1999). As the embryo develops, "the sides of the mole's face swell into ridges that round into fat little cylinders embedded in the skin. After the moles are born, the cylinders come loose at the back end

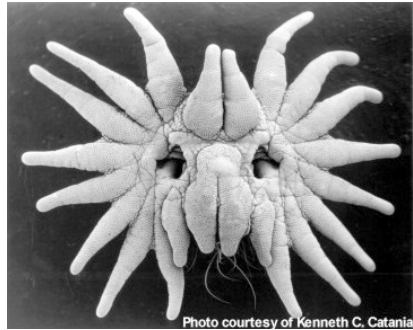


Photo courtesy of Kenneth C. Catania

and spring forward to form the species' distinctive nose fringe."

"Why would you peel up an appendage from the side of your face instead of growing it out, the way everybody else in the universe does it?" asks Catania. That question has not yet been answered, but Catania reckons he's looking at "a great opportunity for molecular investigation"

We'll be watching for the results of Ken Catania's genetic investigations into this common but seldom seen denizen of our Nova Scotia wetlands.

\*\*\*

Rankin, Bill. 1998. "Star of the swamp." *National Wildlife* (December/January 1997).

Milius, S. 1999. "Snouts: A star is born in a very odd way." *Science News* 156:17, 261.

Endangered species:

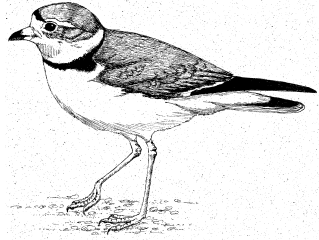
# Piping plovers gain new champion

Earlier this year Anna McCarron sent a message to naturalists via the NatureNS e-mail list to introduce herself

As of January, 2001, I took on the position of provincial coordinator for the Nova Scotia Piping Plover Guardian Program (NSPPGP), a program of the Nova Scotia Bird Society.

It has been a great challenge to read all that everyone has to offer, but it has proven to be worth it for the wealth of knowledge that abounds here [on NatureNS]. As a member, I know I will collect all kinds of valuable observations about piping plovers as they begin to arrive in the coming months.

The following is a media release inviting you or anyone you know to go a step further and become a Guardian



of the Nova Scotia Piping Plover Guardian Program. You are also welcome to send or to post this release in your neighbourhood, or to take to meetings in your area. Guardians are provided with materials as well as training to help educate the public about the plight of the piping plover.

## THE PIPING PLOVER: AN ENDANGERED SPECIES NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Piping plovers are small shorebirds that breed and struggle to raise their families on some of our Nova Scotia beaches. They are officially listed as an endangered species in Canada. This is mostly due to inadvertent disturbances by humans on nesting beaches that disrupt the normal behaviours of piping plovers, often resulting in the loss of nests and chicks. Such disturbances include sport and recreation activities near the nests, campfires, ATV activity in nesting habitats, beachcombing, unleashed pets, and litter, which attracts natural predators such as crows.

The Nova Scotia Piping Plover Guardian Program was formed in 1992 to assist in conservation of, and recovery efforts for, the piping plover in Atlantic Canada. Volunteer guardians encourage the beach public to simply give these birds room to raise their chicks. The program has been promoting a Share the Beach campaign since 1992. During the breeding season – May through mid-July – volunteer guardians post signs, spend time at the posted boundaries, enhance public awareness of the plover's plight, and ask the public to avoid the posted areas.

The Piping Plover Guardian Program is a program of the Nova Scotia Bird Society with support from the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. It is a cooperative, largely volunteer effort, involving people from all walks of life, including students, families, and seniors. Training, uniforms and public education materials are provided.

This season, volunteer guardians are especially needed in the counties of Antigonish, Pictou, Halifax, Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne, and Cape Breton.

If you would like to become a volunteer Piping Plover Guardian, or if you would like more information, please contact Anna McCarron by phone at (902) 860-1263 or by e-mail at [plover@istar.ca](mailto:plover@istar.ca).

## Skunk deodorizer

Here is the quintessential skunk deodorizer for pets that have been sprayed. It chemically neutralizes the smell. The recipe is from chemist Paul Krebaum in the October 1993 *Chemical & Engineering News* (p. 90).

Bathe the animal (your pet, not the skunk) in a mixture of 1 quart of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide (from the drug store), ¼-cup of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), and 1 teaspoon of liquid detergent. After five minutes, rinse with water. Repeat if necessary. The mixture must be used after mixing and will not work if it is stored for any length of time. (CAUTION: Do not store in a closed container – it releases oxygen gas and could break the container.) This mixture may bleach hair. I heard of one black Labrador retriever that was chocolate-coloured after this treatment.



Some additional tips: Perform this operation outside so the volatile skunk spray does not contaminate your house. To remove residual skunk odour from your clothes and any towels or rags, wash them with one cup of liquid laundry bleach per gallon of water.

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[This piece is adapted from an e-mail posted to NatureNS by naturalist Rick Ballard in September 1999.]

# The biosphere reserve concept

In 1968, the UNESCO Conference on the Conservation and Rational Use of the Biosphere gave rise to the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme within UNESCO. The biosphere reserve concept was key to achieving MAB's objective of striking a balance between conserving biodiversity, encouraging economic and social development, and preserving cultural values.

Biosphere reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal-marine ecosystems where, through zoning patterns and management mechanisms, the conservation of ecosystems and their biodiversity is ensured.

Each biosphere reserve has three basic functions: 1) a conservation function to contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation; 2) a development function to foster socially and ecologically sustainable economic and human development; and 3) a logistic function to provide support for research, monitoring, education, and information exchange related to local, national, and global issues of conservation and development.

For management purposes, each reserve is divided into three zones: 1) a **core zone** of strictly protected areas – used to monitor natural changes in representative ecosystems and to serve as conservation areas for biodiversity – with very little human influence; 2) a **buffer zone** surrounding the core zone where only low-impact activities – such as research, environmental education,

and recreation – are allowed; and 3) an outer **transition zone** where sustainable use of resources by local communities is encouraged and where human impacts can be assessed in comparison with zones of greater protection.

While traditional parks often attempt to form small protected areas in a world increasingly dominated by severe human impacts, biosphere reserves are designed to bring people and nature together to demonstrate how to use nature while at the same time preserving it.

## The Global Picture

A primary goal of UNESCO-MAB is the exchange of scientific knowledge and management experience. More than 335 biosphere reserves in 85 countries form a global network of scientists and natural resource managers working to maintain the long-term survival of fragile ecosystems. With its unique structure, this biosphere reserve network is an effective medium for the worldwide exchange of ideas and information on conserving biodiversity and monitoring ecological changes.

To date, 10 biosphere reserves have been designated in Canada: two in BC, one each in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, two in Ontario, and three in Quebec. For more information on Canadian Biosphere Reserves, visit the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association website: [http://www.cbra\\_acrb.ca/english/default.htm](http://www.cbra_acrb.ca/english/default.htm)



## How to keep birds off your squirrel feeder

Names like “feathered fiend” and “flying vermin” could accurately describe those pesky squirrel-feeder thieves. Many of you probably have a squirrel feeder, and you have a problem with birds.

Keeping birds off your squirrel feeder is probably not the easiest thing to do, but here is a suggestion:

Instead of using your current feeder, you can buy a small box (not a paper one) with a lid. Make sure there is a screen on the top so the squirrels can smell the food inside. They will be able to lift the lid and take the food. Birds can't do this.

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[For all things squirrelly, visit Andrew Watts' Squirrel Mansion at <http://www.angelfire.com/fl/scalisti/sm.html>.]

## The age advantage?

It is a cliché that predators prefer to take prey that are sick, old, or young. Such prey would presumably be easier to catch. But until recently there has been surprisingly little evidence to show that it is actually true.

The theory has now been put to the test. Anders Moller and Johannes Erritzoe of Université Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris have compared the health of birds killed by domestic cats with those killed in accidents such as flying into windows or moving vehicles. Their results have recently been published in the journal *Oecologia*.

The researchers examined the size of the dead birds' spleens. They chose the spleen because birds succumbing to lots of infections, or inundated with energy-sapping parasites, have smaller spleens than healthy birds. The size of the spleen is thus a good indicator of how immuno-compromised, or sickly, the bird is.

They examined more than 500 birds from 18 species. In 16 species, the spleens of individuals killed by cats were significantly smaller than those of individuals killed accidentally. The spleens of the species in question were, on average, a third smaller in the birds that had been killed by cats. In five – skylarks, house sparrows, blackcaps, lesser whitethroats, and spotted flycatchers – the difference was more than half. In only two species, robins and goldcrests, was there no discernible difference.

Drs Moller and Erritzoe also checked for other differences between predator-prone and accident-prone birds. Weight, sex, and wing length, all of which might have been forecast to be significant, were not. But age – or rather youth – was. Almost 70 percent of the birds killed by cats were youngsters. Of those killed accidentally, half were young and half were adult.

So two-thirds of the cliché appears to be true. Sick birds and young birds are at greater risk of ending up in a predator's stomach than healthy adults. But old ones, at least according to this study, are not. Perhaps age and guile count for something after all.

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[from *The Economist* 3 June 2000, p. 82]

# Wild naturalists I have known

(with apologies to Ernest Seton-Thompson)

by Jean Timpa

In this first of two parts, Jean Timpa reminisces about some of the people who influenced her journey to becoming a naturalist

Being here – anywhere in Nova Scotia – never ceases to amaze me. My first visit to one of the family homesteads in Nova Scotia occurred in the summer of 1945 at the tender age of two and a half. I remember little of it consciously, but I am sure it was the beginning of the greatest fascination for this land that anyone ever has had except possibly my dad. Along the way a number of humans and wild creatures have been instrumental in cementing my bonds to this heaven on earth.

The following is a reminiscence about some of the interesting people who nurtured my great interest in geology, astronomy, and the various natural sciences. They are the real reason I did not turn to some other academic area. My apologies for any omissions, as every relationship, no matter how brief, is an important one.

Born in Maine to parents who also thrived best in the outdoors – gardening, fishing (especially brook trout), berrying, mountain climbing, visiting

coastal areas, canoeing, or just walking about to see what was about and photographing all precious moments of it – I could not help but be caught up in like endeavours. It also helped greatly that my dad taught for 25 years at the University of Maine in Orono, which at that time was a relatively small university allowing for friendships to be made easily among the faculty and their families. One of our first bondings was to the ornithologist and his family. That led to most of the zoology department, then to botany and especially to the entomology department when it quickly became apparent that butterflies and moths were my first love.

Dad's office also just happened to be just a few doors down from the wildlife unit, so he spent considerable time there learning as much as he could informally about what he loved best – the great outdoors. One day he announced that a gentleman from Sable River, Nova Scotia, had arrived to do some research on the feeding habits of

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*Jean Timpa is a keen observer of nature in the Annapolis Valley, especially on the dikelands in the vicinity of her Wolfville, Nova Scotia, home.*

wildcats or bobcats in Nova Scotia. We didn't see too many Canadians at the university, so this was a great novelty. Not long after, I went to my dad's office as I quite often did and was introduced to Dr Harrison Lewis, the first chief of the Canadian Wildlife Service, recently retired. He promptly took me under his wing and showed us the bobcat scats. He explained how he dissected them and determined what all those minute parts were.

Dr Lewis came several winters as part of his research. Eventually we visited him in Sable River at his home. Knowing of my keen interest in biology, he started talking about his alma mater, Acadia, gently hinting that I should consider it as a university to attend. Now, thanks at least in part to Dr Lewis, here I sit in my Wolfville home.

One favour deserved another. A few years later quite by accident we met him getting off the boat in Digby. He was quite distressed to learn that the bus for Yarmouth had left about half an hour earlier. (Keeping various modes of public transportation out of sync was a fashionable way to force people to stay in places and spend money.) I told him I thought I could get him to Yarmouth if he would hurry along with me to the taxi stand, and, sure enough, there was a car quickly filling up going to Yarmouth and actually slightly cheaper than the bus. This was a means of transportation we college students commonly used as long as we could get enough paying customers to make it worthwhile.

Several weeks later I received a profuse thank-you note for making it

possible for the twice-widowed Dr Lewis to reach Yarmouth on schedule to propose to his third wife. When we met him in Digby, he had been returning from Ontario where he had visited several sons to gain their permission first. When the lovely couple came to Wolfville as part of their honeymoon, they took me out to supper so I could meet the missis.

I believe Dr Lewis was one of the prime movers and shakers behind the formation of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and I know he was the founder of the Nova Scotia Natural Resources Council, which did not survive – a real shame, in my opinion. He came to Acadia as a guest lecturer and field trip supervisor the spring I was taking ornithology. I'll always remember the lovely spring morning in April three carloads of us were heading back down the North Mountain (I the only girl in the class) when Peter Smith in the lead car suddenly jammed on his brakes, jumped out and waved excitedly toward the bare hardwoods on the side of the hill. We all looked up to see our first pileated woodpecker, very uncommon at that time (about 1964) in Nova Scotia. Dr Lewis was beaming, as though he had just brought a new child into the world, but to us he had really introduced us to the contagious pleasure of “ticking” an unusual sighting.

Our paths continued to cross, and one evening after I was married and living in Wolfville he and his wife came to supper along with my parents. Dad (who already knew the answer and had alerted me to play innocent) asked Dr Lewis if, when he was in Ottawa as chief

of the Canadian Wildlife Service, he knew Farley Mowat. “Yup,” came his quick reply, “I hired him and I fired him!” Then he added more genteelly, “But perhaps it was a good thing in the long run, as it seems he has become quite a writer.” Thus was born *Never Cry Wolf*, in which Dr Lewis is mentioned none too kindly, but not by name.

Dr Lewis continued to come to Wolfville to do a little research or to attend the Baptist Convention (his father was a Baptist minister). Toward the end of these visits he wanted to stay with us, for he had become diabetic and wanted to be sure that he could follow exactly his diet. He knew he could trust me, so he said, and sent me the dietary requirements, which really weren’t that difficult. We always enjoyed his stories, and by this point he had been asked by the Canadian Wildlife Service to write his memoirs, which he laboured over with his usual care and exactitude. He asked me to proofread some of them and wanted to know what I thought of them. They were wonderfully done, but for some reason he and Ottawa could not come to a publishing agreement, and as far as I know all his work came to nothing.

I hope somewhere the manuscript still exists, possibly at the Dalhousie library, as I know many or most of his books were sold to them. One could read of how it was his duty in the winter, as a young junior officer in the wildlife department, to set up bird feeders for five identical little girls – the Dionne quintuplets – in their compound, and in the spring to put up bird baths and houses.

We corresponded quite a bit, and in 1972 when I began the Blomidon Naturalists Society newsletter I asked him if he would like to contribute some sightings from the South Shore, which he did faithfully until his death. I knew he had published a regular nature column in the Shelburne *Coast Guard*, so in one of my letters to his widow I asked her what had ever become of his copies of them. She had been wondering what to do with them and offered them to me. They were full of wonderful anecdotes, some of which were still quite interesting to republish. When I was through with them, the BNS executive and I decided to file them in the Acadia Library. I hope they are still safely there.

Charlie Allen, one of the first presidents of the Nova Scotia Bird Society, was, I believe, a nephew of Dr Lewis. One summer in the late fifties or early sixties he held a presidential field day at Crescent Beach, where he led the members through the shorebirds along the beach and dunes. Among them was an immature Ipswich sparrow, which created no end of excitement. Returning finally to our cars we went through a wooded area where we looked and listened particularly for warblers. I volunteered to keep a written list and was busily trying to record all this information properly, hoping my spelling was correct. Suddenly I noticed high in the canopy of maples a small bird flitting about and tried to point it out to our leader. He struggled to find it disguised among the leaves, and finally the bird moved. It was a black-throated green warbler – not unusual, but nice to have for the list. But he turned to me and

said in awe, “How did you ever see that!?” His comment meant a lot to this neophyte teenage birder, especially coming from the principal of the School for the Blind. That challenge to observe and see the unseeable – a game I always like to play against myself – was certainly impressed upon me that day.

As usual, we were heading to the old farmhouse in Bear River almost every summer to visit the clan and find solace in the deep woods, streams, and lakes of southwestern Nova Scotia. By the mid-fifties, however, Dad also became involved with an interesting research project centred in Digby. This led to meeting Victor Cardoza and eventually his wife, Eileen, his daughter, Elizabeth, and best friend and godmother to Elizabeth, Louise Daley, all of Digby. Louise’s father, Major William Daley, reintroduced the white-tailed deer to our part of the province in the early 1900s. Eileen and Louise had much in common with my mother and me – an abiding interest in wildflowers and birds. They were always discovering something new or exciting or knew someone in the area who had some oddity worth seeing.

Louise finally developed such a reputation as a birder that she became known as the Bird Lady, with her own column of sightings and helpful information in the *Digby Courier*, a local weekly newspaper. She also took in injured birds and fallen fledglings and had remarkable success stories with a number of them. What she didn’t know she would find out by calling Robie Tufts. Eileen, I believe, was the first vice-president of the Nova Scotia Bird Soci-

ety. Summer evenings the Cardozas often drove up to Bear River to visit us and swap stories about recent sightings. Sometimes I could show them something of interest. Very hot evenings we often drove down to see them because it truly was at least 10 degrees cooler nearer the ocean, and quite often the fog helped cool us even more.

One evening as we arrived, Victor told us not to get comfortable – we were all going out for a short drive. So we picked up Louise and headed out toward Point Prim lighthouse on the west side of Digby Gut. We stopped about halfway along, got out of the cars, and quietly walked to a nearby pond, which could easily have been an artificial one. Standing on the earthen dam, Eileen, an apple in her hand, started calling. The pond not being very big, we could easily see to the other end and suddenly realized that two beaver were headed our way, churning along at great speed. Delight and disbelief set in all at the same time, but then I thought about who we were with and just had to grin. Sure enough, the beaver swam right up to Eileen and took the apple. I was invited to offer the other apple to the other beaver, which of course I was thrilled and honoured to do. Very gently, the beaver took the apple in its paws, then chewed it up with those great grinding yellow incisors. I know – feeding wild animals is a real no-no, but a number of people had discovered this pastime, and the beaver were very accommodating and had the humans well trained.

Hiliary Sircom was recently rewriting some old CBC radio scripts for a

book and, needing an update on Louise Daley, she asked Sherman Williams if he could put a message on NatureNS asking for any recent information. I responded, mentioning the Cardozas in some regard to Louise. That immediately got a thrilled reaction from Joan Waldron, who had been helping set up the office for the newly formed Sable Island Preservation Trust. She had an article about Trixie Boutilier, who lived on Sable Island with her brothers and who recorded and reported much invaluable natural history of the island for years. Trixie was a cousin of Eileen's, and Victor, as a reporter for the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, had done a fine feature article on her life and work on the island. Joan very much wanted to get permission to republish this article but needed permission from one of Vic's relatives. Fortunately, Elizabeth and I have kept in touch over the years, and the problem was solved quite quickly thanks to memories, anecdotes, and chat lines.

As a biology major at Acadia, I soon heard about the legendary Robie Tufts. Wolfville was small, and it was not long before I heard him speak at some function. When the first edition of *The Birds of Nova Scotia* was published, I was fortunate to be given this wonderful book on Christmas. One thing led to another, and I consulted him on some sightings of interest to me.

In late April or early May of 1969,

my husband and I had finished our education exams and, returning to Wolfville Harbour from an evening walk on the dike, we noticed two handsome killdeer feeding in the mud. As these birds were virtually unheard of at that point in our Nova Scotia ornithological history, I couldn't wait to arrive at Robie's door and tell him of our find.

About forty pairs of killdeer nested on a particularly rocky corner of my father-in-law's farm just outside of Brome Lake, Quebec, so we both knew the birds well. We often walked up to that part of the pasture to watch their antics. Robie's response to our sighting in the harbour was an immediate, "Impossible!" And, despite our offer of a guided tour, he definitely did not want to bother to go see the birds. So it ended up being a loss for everyone, as he didn't see them for his meticulous records, and I lost the chance to show the Great One a real special event.

As our first honorary member of the Blomidon Naturalists Society, Robie was, like Dr Lewis, a most faithful correspondent to the newsletter. Without being reminded and without fail, he brought an article to my house every three months for many years, until his health prevented further efforts. Needless to say, it was definitely our gain to have fresh material from him when he was still writing intriguing stories in his nineties.



# Canadian Nature Federation & Nature Saskatchewan Conference

## **prairie to Pine**



June 7–10, 2001

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Hosted by the Saskatoon Nature Society

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# Congratulations

The **Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research** was doubly honoured at a January ceremony at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History in Halifax. The occasion was held to celebrate individuals and groups active in protecting the Gulf of Maine and its watershed.

**Dr Mike Brylinsky**, a scientist at the centre, received the Gulf of Maine Council Visionary Award. The centre itself, located at Acadia University in Wolfville, won a Nova Scotia Environmental Awareness Award. Other award winners included the **Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre** in Cornwallis and the **Western Valley Development Authority**, which supports sustainable development and economic growth in Digby and Annapolis counties.

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment was established in 1989 by the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine to foster cooperation in the Gulf of Maine watershed. Its mission is to maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine and to allow for sustainable resource use by existing and future generations.

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