

# NEWS

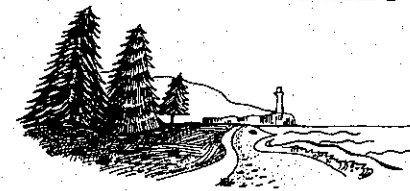
Federation of  
Nova Scotia  
Naturalists

Volume 4, No. 1

Spring 1994

ISSN 1188-326X

Join us in Nova Scotia  
for  
**A JOURNEY FROM FOREST TO SEA**



23rd Canadian Nature Federation Annual Conference

at  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

August 4-7, 1994

*Hosted by the Halifax Field Naturalists*

Registration kit available from:  
Peter Payzant, CNF Conference Registrar  
P.O.Box 2, Waverley, NS B0N 1S0  
Tel. 902-861-1607 (Call before 10pm, AST/ADT)

Registration Deadlines: July 14 for Conference; June 24 for Pre & Post Field Trips



FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA NATURALISTS

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# THE FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA NATURALISTS,

The FNSN is an umbrella group comprised of naturalist organizations from across Nova Scotia. We present a unified voice concerning natural history issues.

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 Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society - Jeff Pike  
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**Staff:** Colin Stewart, Endangered Spaces Coordinator



## Member Organization Addresses:

**Annapolis Field Naturalists Society:** P.O. Box 576, Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0  
**Blomidon Naturalists Society:** P.O. Box 127, Wolfville, NS B0P 1X0  
**Cape Breton Naturalists Society:** c/o Cape Breton Centre for Heritage and Science  
 225 George St., Sydney, NS B1P 1J5  
**Chignecto Naturalists Club:** P.O. Box 1327, Sackville, NB E0A 3C0  
**Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society:** 471 Poplar St., Cole Harbour, NS B2W 4L2  
**Eastern Mainland Field Naturalists:** c/o Kerstin Mueller, P.O. Box 117, Mulgrave, NS  
 B0E 2G0  
**Halifax Field Naturalists:** c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer  
 St., Halifax, NS B3H 3A6  
**Les Amis du Plein Air:** P.O. Box 472, Cheticamp, NS B0E 1H0  
**Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society:** c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer  
 St., Halifax, NS B3H 3A6  
**Tusket River Environmental  
 Protection Association:** c/o Carol Jacquard, Box 8A, R.R. #1, Tusket, NS  
 B0W 3M0  
**Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists:** c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer  
 Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3A6  
**Contact:** Michael Downing: 902-823-2081 or  
 Alice White: 902-467-3380

**FNSN MEMBERSHIP** is available in conjunction with memberships in the member organizations listed above, for \$5.00 - contact the membership secretary of your organization. Group, corporate and other category rates are available. Individual membership, available directly from the FNSN, entitles you to a quarterly newsletter and a vote at the AGM.

Please fill in the following information, include a cheque or money order made payable to the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, and mail to: The Treasurer, FNSN, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3A6

Please check one:  Single adult \$12  Family \$15  Students/Seniors \$10

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# FNSN NEWS

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Parks Operation Review: Our Submission .....	3
Minutes of the FNSN Special General Meeting .....	5
A New Occurrence of a Canadian Rarity .....	7
New Project to Test Thousands of Plants for Medicinal Value .....	8
1994 FNSN AGM Conference .....	9
Projects in Partnership at the N.S. Museum of Natural History .....	11
Tobeatic Revisited .....	14

## Notice of Publication

### *Rare Vascular Plants in the Canadian Arctic*

*By Cheryl McJannet, George Argus,  
Sylvia Edlund and Jacques Cayouette*

Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa (1993), 79 pages.

Available from: Direct Mail, Canadian Museum of Nature, Box 3443, Station "D", Ottawa, ON K1P 6P4; phone 1-800-263-4433. Cost: \$14.92 (includes postage, handling and GST).

This publication is the latest to emerge from the Canadian Rare Plants Project, which is supported by the Research Division of the Canadian Museum of Nature. It was compiled to identify the rare vascular plants of the Canadian Arctic as part of the Canadian contribution to the International Circumpolar Agreement on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna. These rare Arctic taxa represent a unique part of Canadian biodiversity and their recognition is an important step toward characterization and representation of Arctic ecosystems.

The following members have moved but have not forwarded a change of address. Anyone knowing new addresses for either should please forward the current address to the editor: Bud Rumsby, 15 Collins Grove, Dartmouth  
 Sonja Tang, 903-5415 Victoria Rd., Halifax.

watercourses that flow into the Park [meaning Keji] and separation distances [meaning 'buffers'] necessary to preserve the wilderness experience." As used here, wilderness experience seems to describe a layout that could be interrupted by resource extraction which, by virtue of access roads alone, is not a wilderness.

We can only hope this pledge to protect watercourses and separation distances will result in a larger preservation area which includes shed and feeder waters to the north and west, merger with Keji Park borders and even the Tobeatic Wildlife Management Area, not now protected from logging/mining activities. The concern is that proposed boundaries will shrink, not expand.

On the basis of public information, the Government seems ambivalent about how to carry out a long-held commitment to "shared resources" (consumptive and non-consumptive users) through adequate preservation of a bio-diverse habitat, pegged by authorities at 10-12% of the province set aside for non-consumptive uses. Less than 2.5% of the province is now protected by legislation in Nova Scotia, and most of that (2.25%) is federally owned.

In November, John Leefe's bill to Establish the Tobeatic Wilderness failed to gain second reading. Two issues beg attention and involvement. Legislators need to hear from Nova Scotians who understand and care about the high stakes of environmental preservation as it pertains to the shared use of Crown lands. The ever-present, valid interests of industry must be balanced by those of the entire citizenry, which holds title to this natural resource.

Register your views and values with Premier John Savage, Ministers Downe, Bragg, Harrison, and Norrie, and your own MLA. Views of ordinary citizens are so under-represented, politicians routinely assume each of our letters equals ten. Write (the addresses are on page 16), call or fax.

The second issue begging attention pertains to the March release of the Parks Systems Plan recommendations and the subsequent widely-held public consultations. For these forums to work, Nova Scotians of every stripe must attend these regional meetings to tell their side, their story. Your appearance will be measured ten-fold!

The Tobeatic Wilderness Committee is grateful for the support received by Federation members and continues to welcome inquiries.

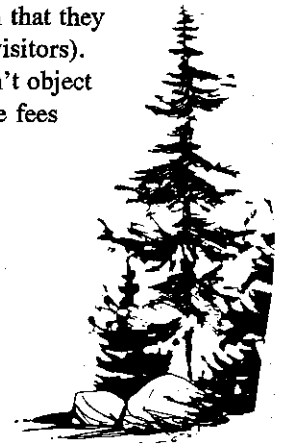
TWC, R.R. #1 - Box 5, Riverview Road, Bear River, N.S. BOS 1B0  
or Phone: 467-3313 & 467-3380.

system, and that without knowing where the system is going we cannot say that any particular campground is inappropriate and can be closed completely. It is quite conceivable that some parks which will forever cost money may be important enough to either the system or local tourism and economic objectives that a moderate perpetual loss is acceptable. The same applies to day use facilities. With roadside facilities, it is generally both less critical and less costly to reverse an error. We suggest that if the revenue and efficiency measures mentioned above are addressed then we can reassess the 'new' situation in terms of costs, system needs and priorities once we have a system plan from which to work.

We also suggest that we are hiding our light under a barrel. Parks, with or without campgrounds, are a significant heritage feature of the province. Better awareness, both within Nova Scotia and outside, would mean more use and appreciation. We are not suggesting a major 'come see our parks' campaign. First, in many cases, there is not sufficient infrastructure in place to protect the parks from overuse. Second, there is significant variation in quality. Third, there are significant gaps. We need a plan of operation and a means of implementation which will see our parks brought up to a more consistent quality and level of opportunity while slowly increasing the level of public (including tourist) awareness.

Some people visit an area principally for museums or crafts or cities or festivals. Others are more interested in parks and natural settings. With good management, there are opportunities here for economic benefits for (mostly) rural communities. Increased tourism also fills in weekday vacancies without adding all that much extra pressure to already busy weekends. In short, parks are currently given both inadequate recognition and inadequate promotion.

Government policy on day use parks has been that they are a free service to Nova Scotians (and hence to visitors). Should this remain so? While we certainly wouldn't object if it did, we think it is reasonable to collect day use fees under some circumstances. First, obviously, the revenue must more than make up for the collection effort. The second relates to public attitudes towards taxation levels and parks and wildlife. Generally, people feel over-taxed. Nonetheless, surveys show that many people are willing to pay more if the extra funds go directly to additional protection for 'nature'. The key is 'additional'. Revenue collected from day use areas (such as parking fees on weekends at major

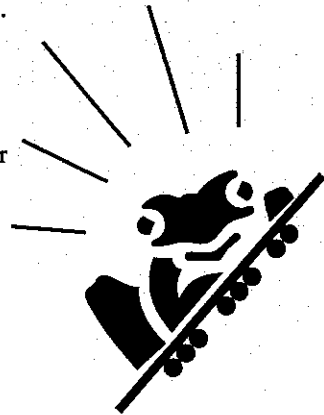


This edition incorporates a summary of documented natural history information compiled since the first publication. There are some new subjects such as an introduction to cultural landscapes and an increased emphasis on the offshore areas of Nova Scotia. It is hoped that the changes will be appreciated and that people will continue to contribute their opinions and information.

The book is currently undergoing a graphic facelift and is expected to be ready for distribution in the late spring. Copies will be available at the Museum and also at the Government Bookstore.

### Frogwatch '94

Frogwatch '94 is an environmental education project being organized this spring for Halifax County. Funded under the federal Environmental Partners Fund, this pilot project is a joint effort among The Clean Nova Scotia Foundation, the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, and Windsor based Enviro-sphere Consultants Ltd. The partners are involving the schools and youth groups in the County in a spring peeper monitoring study.



This project is designed to increase interest in, and understanding of, natural changes by encouraging the participants to observe, to record, and to experience their environment. In this way, it reflects one of the original phenological studies conducted in Nova Scotia by A.H. McKay, superintendent of schools at the turn of the century. This inspired gentleman organized a province-wide program of natural history observations carried out in the schools. For several decades, teachers and students watched and recorded changes in plant and animal life, weather, and other natural phenomena, throughout the year.

One of the things these early observers noted was the "piping of frogs" - the spring peeper. The timing of the peeper was one of the signs of spring. Linked as it is to temperature, it has also become a means of assessing the climate today, especially when we are so concerned with declining amphibian populations and the possibility of global warming.

Frogwatch '94 is a pilot project, which, if successful and resources permit, could become the prototype for a more extensive survey in 1995. The project team wants to again involve students and youth groups because they have both the necessary enthusiasm and interest in environmental issues. It is designed to make science fun and accessible, while at the same time contributing population and distribution data to baseline studies.

The project is aimed at youths, however, both younger and older Nova Scotians have shown interest in participating. By June, we expect to have a report available.

**MOTION #1:** that item 2(c) of the Memorandum of Association of the Federation be amended by the removal of clause i), which reads "opposing resource extraction in parks and other protected areas;", and by the integration of clause ii) into the text of the main item, with the addition of the words "within them" at the end, so that 2(c), as amended, will read "defending the integrity of existing sanctuaries by exercising constant vigilance against pollution and habitat destruction within them;".

**MOVED BY:** the board of directors, FNSN / **MOTION #1 CARRIED.**

**MOTION #2:** that the bylaws of the Federation be amended by the addition of a new item, item 47, to read "Upon dissolution, surrender or winding up of the Society, or upon revocation of the Society's designation as a designated conservation organization pursuant to the provisions of the Conservation Easement Act, S.N.S.1992, c.2, the Society shall make all reasonable efforts to have any easements or covenances acquired by the Society pursuant to the said Act assigned to another organization designated as a designated conservation organization or to the Minister of Natural Resources for the Province of Nova Scotia pursuant to the said Act. Unless otherwise stipulated in the easement, the order of preference is FNSN member organizations or other organizations working with the FNSN to maintain the particular easements, followed by like-minded provincial, then federal organizations, followed by the provincial government."

**MOVED BY:** the board of directors, FNSN

### **MOTION TO AMEND THE SPECIAL RESOLUTION:**

**To correct the following sentence:**

"...the Society shall make all reasonable efforts to have any easements or covenances acquired by the Society pursuant to the said Act assigned to..."

**To read:**

"...the Society shall make all reasonable efforts to have any and all easements or covenants acquired by the Society pursuant to the said Act assigned to..."

**MOVED BY: Terry Power / SECONDED: J. Pike**  
**AMENDMENT TO MOTION CARRIED.**

**MOTION #2 CARRIED.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: C. Stewart / Seconded: J. Wolford**  
**CARRIED** 8:20 pm.

## PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP AT THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Sue Browne

The problems involved in gathering resources to mount nature study and education projects today can sometimes be solved by partnerships. Three exciting projects now based at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History were made possible through co-operative ventures among various combinations of non-profit, private and government organizations: Species Status Sheets, The Natural History of Nova Scotia, and Frogwatch '94.

### Species Status Sheets

In 1991, in response to an increasing demand for information on the flora and fauna of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History started a series of status sheets on rare and endangered species in the province to be made available to the public. Each sheet provides a concise overview of pertinent information on a particular species and a list of references to point to further information - if desired. The purposes of these sheets are to increase awareness of the flora and fauna of Nova Scotia, to facilitate quick response to requests for information from the general public, and to provide knowledge to allow people to make informed decisions on environmental action.

In September 1993, a project was started to produce another series of status sheets on 50 species. This project is funded by the Environmental Partners Fund, sponsored by the Blomidon Field Naturalists and supported by the N. S. Museum of Natural History and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The status sheets include pest species (e.g. earwigs, lice), introductions (e.g. purple loosestrife, giant slug) and species of public interest (e.g. little brown bat, bloodroot). The sheets for this series will be produced in a simpler format for use by schools. A sample of the format is shown on page 12.

### The Natural History of Nova Scotia

The Natural History of Nova Scotia is a two volume document that describes the province's natural processes, species, habitats and landscapes. It was first published in 1984 by the provincial Departments of Natural Resources and Education as a park planning manual. The book has been used by a variety of interest groups and individuals besides park planners. This encouraging reception prompted a reprint in 1989.

In 1990, the Museum and provincial Parks staff recognised that the document needed to be updated and the revision was initialised. The project was funded under the Canada/Nova Scotia Cooperation Agreement on Sustainable Economic Development. Much of its success, however, was due to the concerted efforts of volunteers including field naturalists. The new edition reflects the continued interest of naturalists and scientists in observing and recording natural phenomena.

## NEW PROJECT TO TEST THOUSANDS OF PLANTS FOR MEDICINAL VALUE

Sandra Sweeney, Olomouc, CZ

In September, the New York Botanical Garden and Pfizer Central Research, a drug company based in Connecticut, USA, announced a two million dollar project to screen tens of thousands of temperate plants in the search for new medicines.

Less than one per cent of the world's higher plants have been studied for their medicinal value, making this a truly exciting project. Perhaps even more interesting is that the project will focus on temperate as opposed to tropical plants.

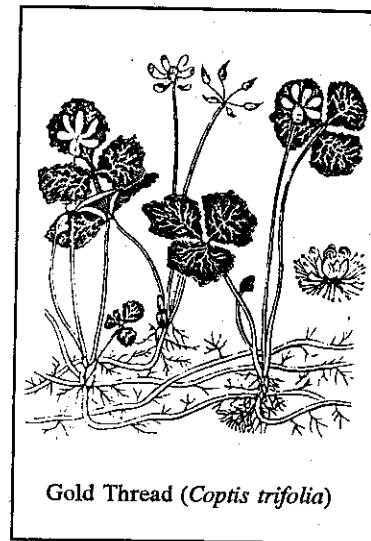
Many of the plant species which occur in Nova Scotia and the Maritime region will be studied. A project of this magnitude provides the opportunity to keep pace with the research and learn about new scientific findings as they relate to those plants with which we are familiar.

Although it is unlikely that any formal collections will be made in the province, it is important that news releases about those plants which investigators believe show therapeutic promise be monitored. In the past, observations about the medicinal values of species have led to over-harvesting both for individual use and for huge international markets.

In the case of a new discovery, one species or several closely related ones may fall victim to over-harvesting which could in turn place one or all of them at risk at both the population and species levels. In some cases, collecting for research itself should be closely monitored to ensure that those species already at risk are not over-harvested under scientific permits.

It is possible that many traditional herbal remedies may come to enjoy scientific backing for their claims. This type of support could lead to local and provincial business development focused on the harvesting of wild flora. In this event, legislators will need to be prepared to protect specific plants, and their allies, in the face of new and profitable economic variables.

This is an exciting project owing both to its size and to its concentration on screening temperate plants in North America. However, the several concerns listed above should keep Society members occupied during the collection and investigation of new samples.



Gold Thread (*Coptis trifolia*)

## FNSN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Antigonish, June 17-19

Host organization: Eastern Mainland Field Naturalists

We invite you to a weekend in Antigonish to enjoy a program of lectures and field trips. Antigonish offers many interesting destinations for naturalists, in particular its harbour. The main venue is the campus of the St. Francis Xavier University.

The program will follow the pattern successfully developed over the earlier conferences. This year's Annual General Meeting will be the centerpoint on Saturday before noon.

Registration and other Friday night events take place at the Royal Canadian Legion, 294 Main Street, Antigonish, starting at 5 pm. Those wishing to register on Saturday may do so at the J. Bruce Brown building (Biology Department) on the St. Francis Xavier campus.

Early registration is helpful to the organizers. Registrations received up to June 8 will be acknowledged and a detailed program with maps and other conference information mailed out. Special activities are planned for children. Their registration is free of charge, however, meals will have to be paid in full.

For information about accommodation we refer you to the Nova Scotia Travel Guide available at tourist information offices. St. F. X. University residence rooms: rate \$25.25 per person per night, double or single occupancy. Includes full cafeteria breakfast and use of recreational facilities. For reservations call 867-2473. Camping at Beaver Mountain Provincial Park for \$8.50/night, also at private campgrounds. A limited amount of billeting available, please request in advance on your registration form.

The Saturday supper in Arisaig will be catered by a volunteer group. Please indicate on the registration form if you prefer the lobster, chicken or vegetarian meal.

A registration form can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Friday night:

Registration starts at 5 pm. Mark Pulsifer, Biologist with the Department of Natural Resources, will present a lecture on the natural history of Antigonish Harbour at 7 pm. A wine-and-cheese reception will follow. The evening will include a slide presentation by Lorriss Keizer entitled 'Approaches for photographing wildlife'. A series of short walks conclude the evening: Jim Wolford and Randy Lauff will take you to explore Antigonish surroundings for amphibians and owls.

Lyghtesome Gallery of Antigonish is going to display and sell publications of interest to naturalists. The Gallery, located at 166 Main Street, invites you to see its show of art work by Linda Johns. Linda Johns is a naturalist and author of the book "Sharing a Robin's Life".

### Early morning walks:

The traditional early morning walks will be conducted: Experienced bird-watchers: Roslyn MacPhee, a well-known warbler specialist, Ken McKenna and Calvin Brennan will lead bird walks. Walks for those with interests in wild flowers will be led by Bruce Partridge and Randy Olson.

### Lectures:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Bob Bancroft  | - Effects of land abuse on inland waterways  |
| Mike Dadswell | - Ecology of the Northumberland Strait and the impact of the Canso Causeway and the proposed P.E.I. fixed link |
| Randy Olson   | - Parasitic plants   |
| Mark Pulsifer | - The natural history of the Antigonish Harbour  |
| Norm Seymour  | - Ospreys and eagles   |

### Field trips scheduled for Saturday afternoon:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Bob Bancroft  | - Pomquet - coastal dune communities                  |
| Randy Lauff   | - Beaver Mountain Provincial Park - the boreal forest |
| Mike Melchin  | - Fossils at Arisaig                                  |
| Tony Miller   | - Mahoneys Beach - shore birds and sand dunes         |
| Mark Pulsifer | - Harbour tour in canoes. Three canoes are available. |

A tour of three local private gardens will also be available.

### Children's programming:

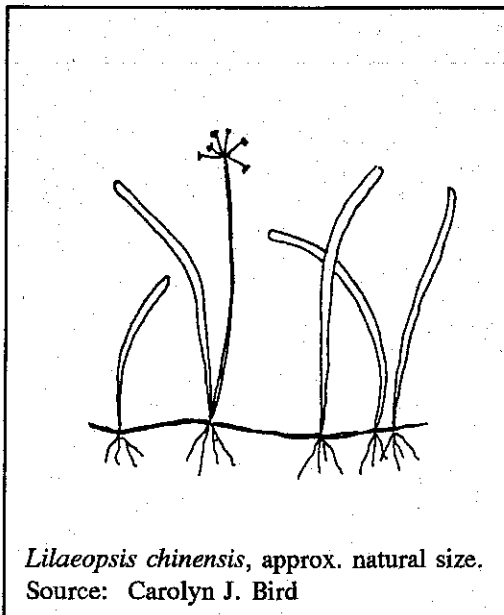
A special program will be arranged for children during the A.G.M. on Saturday. The Saturday afternoon field trip to Beaver Mountain Provincial Park is aimed at families with children.

## A NEW OCCURRENCE OF A CANADIAN RARITY,

### *Lilaeopsis chinensis*

Carolyn J. Bird, NRC Institute for Marine Biosciences, Halifax

A new site for the rare plant *Lilaeopsis chinensis* (L.) Kuntze has been found in the Lahave River estuary. This species has hitherto been known in Canada only from the lower Tusket and Medway rivers in Nova Scotia, where it is fairly abundant along saltmarsh and mud banks for several kilometres. The Lahave discovery was at Weagle Point (Millers Point), near Dayspring, where the municipality of Lunenburg has recently established a forest park along the riverbank. *Lilaeopsis chinensis* is visible only at low tide and is generally inconspicuous. It forms a short, sparse turf under the saltmarsh grass *Spartina alterniflora*, of narrow "leaves" about 4 cm long that are actually thickened and hollow petioles arising singly from a creeping underground stem, as illustrated below. The average observer would be forgiven for thinking, on first inspection, that *L. chinensis* is monocotyledonous, since these petioles have parallel veins and resemble the leaves of an extremely dwarfed eelgrass. The yellowish-white flowers, which appear in late summer and reveal the plant to be dicotyledonous, are infrequent and tiny. Only the radiation of up to nine floral pedicels from the summit of its short (to 6 cm) flower stalk suggests that the plant in fact belongs to the parsley family *Apiaceae* (*Umbelliferae*), a fact confirmed by the floral structure. This family includes carrots, dill, caraway and other large aromatic herbs, and *L. chinensis* is a well-disguised member of it. As in the other two Nova Scotian sites, *L. chinensis* appears well established at Weagle Point, where its status as a park plant will ensure its further protection. Officially designated as "vulnerable" in Nova Scotia, it has been classified as "rare" in neighbouring Maine and "endangered" in New Hampshire, and Nova Scotia naturalists should be on the lookout for further occurrences along muddy brackish shores. Incidentally, the species does not occur in China as suggested by its specific name *chinensis*.



*Lilaeopsis chinensis*, approx. natural size.  
Source: Carolyn J. Bird

PHYLUM CHORDATA

CLASS PISCES

ORDER GASTEROSTEIFORMES

FAMILY GASTEROSTEIDAE

STICKLEBACKS

### Brook (Five-Spined) Stickleback Épinoche à cinq épines

*Culaea inconstans* (Kirtland 1841)

STATUS: Vulnerable in Nova Scotia (NSM)

by Richard P. Van INGEN

**DESCRIPTION:** This very small (51 mm) freshwater fish has a deep body that is slightly compressed laterally. The head is conical with a large eye and well developed teeth in small jaws. The body tapers to a relatively slender caudal peduncle (fleshy part between anal and caudal fins). The length of each spine is usually less than the eye diameter. The smooth, scaleless body is olive-green to olive-black. There are light spots or light wavy vertical lines on the sides. Spawning males have jet black fins and body, slightly tinged with copper. Some males can have a reddish tinge on their pelvic membranes. Females are dusky (4). The maximum size for a Brook Stickleback is 87 mm.

and Pennsylvania. It is found westward to Iowa (skipping Kansas) and Montana. There is a relict population in New Mexico. The disjunct population in Nova Scotia has only been found in Cumberland county in the River Philip, Shinimicas River and Tidnish River watersheds (1,3,4).

These localities are all in Natural History Region 500.

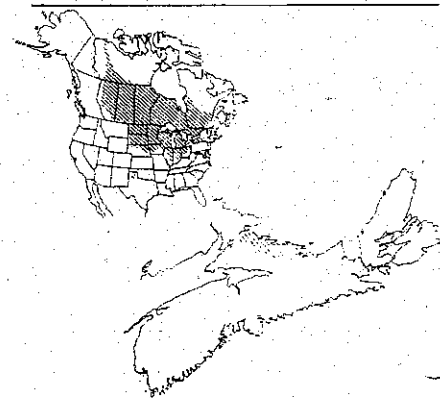


FIGURE 2. Distribution of the Brook Stickleback.

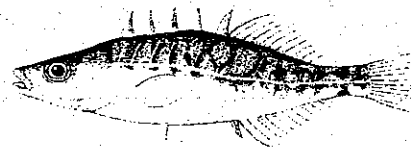


FIGURE 1. *Culaea inconstans*

#### DISTRIBUTION:

TYPE LOCALITY: Ditches and muddy ponds of Trumbull County, Ohio (Kirtland 1841).

The distribution extends from Nova Scotia across Canada and just enters British Columbia. This stickleback is found as far north as the southern Northwest Territories and south through New York

**HABITAT:** The Brook Stickleback likes cool, clear waters of rivers and ponds (4). In Nova Scotia it has been found in silt-bottomed, densely vegetated ponds, as well as in slow moving meandering rivers (1). Cool water appears to be the critical habitat requirement (4).

**NATURAL HISTORY:** Spawning takes place in shallow water from late April through to July. The males arrive first and construct a small cylindrical nest (2 cm in length) out of dead grass, fibers or green algae, cemented together by kidney secretions, on or close to the bottom. The nest is anchored to reeds or

1

beaches) should go into the Parks Trust Fund. An independent committee should apply this fund toward park acquisition or enhancement projects which would generally not be undertaken otherwise.

The private campground owners view the provincial park campgrounds as competition. We agree that provincial rates have to be brought more into line with costs. We would expect that provincial campground rates would be comparable with typical private sector rates for similar facilities. We also feel that it is appropriate, and in the best interest of the parks, to limit provincial campgrounds to a basic level of service, leaving higher levels to the private sector. This would emphasize the park and surroundings, not the facilities, as the main attraction. We also feel there is a expectation of, a demand for, and thus strong pressure to provide campgrounds at some provincial parks. This puts us in complete agreement with some campground owners, and in mild disagreement with others.

We feel that fiscal responsibility is important, especially in a service like campgrounds. We've suggested ways to bring costs in line with revenue. However, campgrounds are part of a park system, and their role in that system is more than just fiscal. We have suggested areas where the whole system needs strengthening. There are both expense and revenue expectations in this strengthening. Until we look at the whole system, we do not believe we can look at cuts (as opposed to efficiency gains) in the components.

### MINUTES of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists' SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

February 3rd, 1994

8:00 pm

Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History  
1747 Summer Street, Halifax, NS

The meeting was called to order by Michael Downing, president of the FNSN at 8:00 pm. A quorum of 20 members was established and it was recorded that representatives of 5 organizations were present: Annapolis Field Naturalists - Alice White; Blomidon Naturalists Society - Jim Wolford; Halifax Field Naturalists - Roy John; Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society - Jeff Pike; and Eastern Mainland Field Naturalists - Michael Downing.

Mr. Downing provided background information for, and explained the nature of, the special resolutions to the meeting.

## TOBEATIC REVISITED

Art White

What's happened with advocacy for the Tobeatic Wilderness Area (TWA) since its coverage in the Summer issue, 1993?

On July 12, 1993, the newly appointed Natural Resources Minister, Don Downe, wrote: "I am pleased to be able to advise you (the Tobeatic Wilderness Committee) that the Tobeatic area has emerged as one of the most outstanding candidates through the Parks and Protected Areas Systems Planning Project which has been under way with the Department for some time. I will be undertaking a comprehensive review of this project in the near future, and anticipate that it will be possible to release the proposed systems plan for public review and comment by late summer or early autumn."

When Tobeatic Wilderness Committee (TWC) members met with Minister Downe on September 28th, they learned:

- 1) the three-year Parks Systems Plan study was deemed "flawed";
- 2) its announcement would be delayed from June 1993 to March 1994;
- 3) to be followed by a public consultation which might take up to a year (with implementation possibly extending to the year 2000);
- 4) in-progress negotiations for purchase of alternative woodlands were stalled; and,
- 5) the previous government's extraction moratorium would remain in effect until the Parks Systems Plan is announced and public consultations completed.

Only recently was it learned of the Parks Systems Plan that "approximately 30 potential candidate protected areas on Nova Scotia Crown lands are under consideration." In his December 13, 1993 letter to the TWC, Mr. Downe also raised the issue of "boundary adjustments" due to "existing contractual land or resource commitments within potential candidate protected areas."

The worry is that the TWA may end up smaller than envisioned, by failing to include sufficient contiguous wilderness or protective perimeter **buffering** (especially along the Keji line and the glacier esker which ridges its northern border) the area. Establishing pie-piece boundary lines and token **uffers** threatens to increase access to special features of the wilderness.

In his July 20, 1993 letter to the Municipality of Annapolis County, Mr. Downe stated: "Concerns that will receive special attention are protection of



## PARKS OPERATION REVIEW: OUR SUBMISSION

Colin Stewart, Endangered Spaces Coordinator

In February, Voluntary Planning conducted a review of park operating costs on behalf of Natural Resources. The trigger, and centre point of discussion, was the subsidization of campgrounds in provincial parks. The panel's report was due at the end of February so that the Minister could have the changes in place for the '94 budget and season. The following are the major points made in our submission.

We agree that having the government subsidize every camper night by more than \$20 is undesirable. Our suggestions included fee increases (from \$7.50 to \$9 or \$10 for pit toilet and \$1 to \$2 more for flush toilet campgrounds); changing the 'seniors camp free' policy to a more usual 10 to 20% discount; operating most campgrounds on weekends only between Victoria Day and mid June; and reducing site numbers (and presumably maintenance costs) in campgrounds that never fill. Altogether these suggestions might cut the subsidy in half, but certainly wouldn't eliminate it.

The background material did not include enough information to be very specific, but we also suggested a smaller work force at each 'small' park staffed by four people. This is possible if the midnight (2 am on weekends) to 7 am shift is composed of either community volunteers or staff 'on call'. Apparently many parks could be run by 2.5 people if it weren't for government employee regulations about such matters as overtime and on call rates. (The problem appears to be one of flexibility, and whether just being on site, even if sleeping, requires full pay.) The larger parks could make similar cuts, but would still have more people.

This brings up contracting out parks. Several other provinces have tried this unsuccessfully. B.C. seems to finally be managing it well (according to both government and environmentalists). It has extremely strict contracts designed to ensure very high standards and ensure park values. Most of the people interested in them are very 'pro-park' to begin with. We haven't opposed contracting out, but we do urge great caution and care.

We do oppose privatization of parks (and thus of campgrounds within parks). There is a fundamental social responsibility which can not be made compatible with the need for a profit.

One of the major points in our submission is that the parks are part of a

**Our suggestions included: fee increases; changes to the 'seniors camp free' policy; changes in the operating period; and a reduction of sites in low volume campgrounds.**

### MUST CONTACTS:

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The Honourable Don Downe	Minister Dept. of Natural Resources Box 698, Halifax, NS B3J 2T9
The Honourable Eleanor Norrie	Minister Dept. of Sport and Recreation Box 864, Halifax, NS B3J 2V2
The Honourable Robbie Harrison	Minister Dept. of Environment Box 2107, Halifax, NS B3J EB7
The Honourable Ross Bragg	Minister Dept. of Economic Development and Tourism Box 456, Halifax, NS B3J 2R5

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Electronic copy is preferred:  
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Articles up to 2,000 words are acceptable.

Write to the editor with your suggestions, your comments, or for a copy of the Editor's Guidelines.  
See the inside front cover for the address & telephone number.

## FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA NATURALISTS

The purpose of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists is to further communication and co-operation among naturalists and natural history societies in Nova Scotia. We also work towards a co-ordinated effort on the provincial level to protect the natural state of our environment. Our activities include:

- Promoting the enjoyment & understanding of nature by our members and the general public by:
  - educating through publications, lectures, symposia, field trips, and other activities;
  - fostering the creation of nature centers and nature education programs, and defending the integrity of existing facilities and programs.
- Encouraging the establishment of protected natural areas, as represented in parks, nature reserves, wilderness areas, heritage rivers, and other such protected areas.
- Defending the integrity of existing sanctuaries by exercising constant vigilance against pollution and habitat destruction within them.
- Promoting and engaging in funding and research needed for protecting the integrity of all natural ecosystems.
- Encouraging and engaging in the protection and restoration of threatened and endangered species, with special attention to the preservation of essential habitats, by:
  - 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;
  - encouraging and facilitating the restoration and enhancement of essential habitats.

FNSN is affiliated with the Canadian Nature Federation and is a member of both the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

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## FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA NATURALISTS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE, June 17-19, 1994 Registration Form

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\_\_\_\_\_

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alternate vegetarian meal (\$7) \_\_\_\_\_

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