



The Official Newsletter of the Atlantic Society of Fish and Wildlife Biologists

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November 4-6, 2008 Atlantic Society of Fish and Wildlife Biologists Annual General Meeting. Best Western, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. For details, see:

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/ASFWB/>

DECISION IN GREAT BLUE HERON NEST DESTRUCTION CASE

October 23, 2008

Based on CBC, June 9th story, Story of Sabine Dietz on the June 9th decision, Nature Canada Blog, Oct 23rd, Plus Environment Canada Press Release

It was the latest court appearance for forestry company JD Irving charged with destroying eight Great Blue Heron nests on J.D. Irving property in Lower Cambridge, NB in 2006, while cutting a forest road. The company pleaded guilty to a violation of the Migratory Bird Convention Act and Provincial Court Judge Patricia Cummings imposed a fine of \$10,000 and ordered the company to make a \$50,000 contribution to Bird Studies Canada (BSC) for bird research and conservation. Becky Whittam of BSC indicated that this amount will be put toward the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas, a five year project of BSC and many partners to document and map the breeding birds of the Maritimes.

Initially, the company challenged the federal authority to legislate with respect to migratory birds. They argued the law is outdated and infringes on provincial jurisdiction. The issue has always been that the Act is so broad (one cannot destroy a nest or disturb a migratory bird), as well as it having been designed to deal with over-hunting. But when Judge Cummings presented her decision on June 9th in the Burton NB, the Court upheld the authority of the federal government to enact the Migratory Birds Convention Act 1994 and confirmed federal responsibility for migratory birds. Judge Cummings also noted that people know what nests are, what destruction and disturbance is, and noted that trivial violations would not be prosecuted in any case (such as a bird's nest in a tree in one's yard that needed to be removed). As to the MBCA being a hunting law, she put this into historical context saying that back in 1916, uncon-



Dwaine Oakley Photo

trolled hunting was the greatest threat to migratory birds, but that law makers cannot be expected to foresee the future. So she clearly stated that applying the act to other violations than hunting today is very much in holding with the intent of the Act - she called the Act an environmental law that today very well applies to conservation and protection of migratory birds.

Irving has pledged to improve its practices of environmental protection. The guilty plea and the unequivocal dismissal of the constitutional challenge to the MBCA both send very clear messages to industry that Environment Canada is serious about enforcing this Act, and that the Act can and will be used to protect migratory birds and their nests.

According to Nature Canada (Blog, Oct 23rd) "Nature New Brunswick, EcoJustice and Nature Canada all played a role as civil society organizations in supporting the Cana-

THANKS TO SAMPAA

In our last issue we reported on the establishment of the ASFWB Donald G Dodds Scholarship at Acadia University but neglected to mention the \$1000 contribution of the Science And Management of Protected Areas Association. Tom Herman presented a cheque at the AGM Banquet on behalf of SAMPAA. It is much appreciated.

dian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada in this case. Kudos go especially to Nature NB and their volunteers for carrying the torch for the Great Blue Heron and the Migratory Bird Convention Act, and for Environment Canada officials who left no doubt in Justice Cummings' mind that this law is a legitimate and indispensable tool to protect bird populations in Canada."

The investigation was led by Environment Canada's Enforcement Branch, with cooperation from New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers.

ASFWB EXECUTIVE

President – Jason LeBlanc - leblanje@gov.ns.ca

Past President – Andrew Boyne - Andrew.Boyne@EC.GC.CA

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VP Student Affairs – Aaron Spares - sparesa@yahoo.com

VP Program (PEI) – Kirby Tulk kirby.tulk@pc.gc.ca

Newsletter Editor – Rosemary Curley frcurley@gov.pe.ca

WHITE-NOSE TOPIC AT BAT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

October 27th, 2008

By Hugh Broders

I've just returned from the annual North American Society on Bat Research (NASBR) where there was a special section to update everyone on the white-nose bat syndrome that we have all heard about.

As a little bit of background, the number of bats dying in New York and surrounding states is huge, amounting to approximately 90% mortality in most of the affected overwintering sites and amounting to tens of thousands of animals. The cause has not been fully proven but it seems very highly likely that it is associated with the fungus found on noses of associated bats during hibernation, hence the name of the condition. The condition was first documented in a small number of caves in NY but since then the zone of infection has increased annually from the core.

In a private conversation that I had with Al Hicks he suggested that it is likely that we will have the condition in the Maritimes in less than 5 years. In the presentation that Al gave to the group he had one slide with a title "These bats will be extirpated in the next number of years" [may not be an exact quote] and there were pictures of 3 bat species: *Myotis lucifugus*, *Myotis septentrionalis* and *Perimyotis subflavus*. In Atlantic Canada these are the only 3 species that we have (exception might be parts of NB). No one knows for sure if this prediction will hold true, and we certainly hope it doesn't. If this worst case scenario does indeed hold true though, it is not inconceivable that we will have no bats in NS and NB and possibly PEI and NL in the next decade (ouch!). So, it is imperative that we keep on top of the situation and have a plan in place.

Do we wish to conduct active monitoring? If yes, how? Do we wish to research the movement patterns of bats so that we can make predictions about how/when this might spread? Are bats on the islands of PEI and Newfoundland safe since they are islands (i.e., is there migration movement back and forth to the mainland?)

DARYL GUIGNION RETIRES FROM UPEI

Daryl Guignon, inspirational educator and environmental activist has retired from UPEI. His impact on those he taught in various Biology courses over forty years can be measured in a large number of graduates working in the field. For Daryl, the line between educator and volunteer was always a bit blurred. The 1997 ASFWB Merit Award Winner devoted much of his "spare time" to serving in environmental groups, from helping to found the Island Nature Trust and the Morell River Management Co-op, to serving on the National Parks Citizens Centennial Committee, the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Zone Management Advisory Committee for Atlantic Salmon. And it is with fish that his heart lies. He has never stopped lobbying for effective legislation and better environmental practices by farmers and highway construction crews to conserve waterways for trout and salmon. Nor will he, it seems. In his first year of "retirement" he has been appointed as "Community Environmental Liason" at UPEI, and has been contracted to develop a strategy for Atlantic Salmon conservation on PEI.

ASFWB should always be very grateful to Daryl Guignon.



Every year for a few decades, he faithfully hauled a van load of students to the AGM to show them what biologists do for a living. Some were impressed and came away inspired to pursue more education in environmental, wildlife or fisheries biology.

On June 19th 2008, a canoeing event was held to honour Daryl. Many of his colleagues, students and friends assembled at the West River, PE and paddled downriver in the sunshine, by chance as a phenomenal orgy of bald eagles fed on spawning blue-backed herring.

Daryl and PEI Fisheries Biologist Rosanne MacFarlane are currently working on a mutual project to raise two small children. (see box)

BABY BOY FOR LONGTIME ASFWB MEMBERS

Who? Rosanne MacFarlane and Daryl Guignon

What? Harrison Dane, weighing in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces

When? Around 2 o'clock am, Oct 22. 2008

Where? Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Charlottetown

Why? A brother for big sister Evelyn.

Congratulations to Rosie and Daryl.

JENNIFER STEWART, WHAT NEXT?

A quick note to advise that Jennifer Stewart has recently accepted a permanent position with CWS and started working again in the Species at Risk program as of September 15th, 2008. She has resumed many of her previous responsibilities such as coordination of Piping Plover (PIPL) field programs in NB and PEI, as well as PIPL data compilation.

TULK RETURNS TO NL ROOTS

Kirby Tulk has accepted a position of Ecosystem Scientist at Terra Nova National Park, where he did his Masters Research on red squirrel predation on balsam fir cones many years ago. Good luck Kirby!

NB BOTANY CLUB AGM

Maureen Toner stepped down as President of the New Brunswick Botany Club at the AGM held October the 18th in the Hugh John Fleming Forestry Complex in Fredericton. According to the incoming President Rick Fournier "Her term will be remembered as the one that established structure and guidelines for the club, setting the club in the proper direction".

The Club encourages a broad appreciation of New Brunswick's rich botanical diversity. Sharing and advancing knowledge of NB flora and promoting conservation and protection of native plants are stated goals. The club hosts workshops, field trips and other botany-related events around the province, with club members ranging from expert to novice.

For more information about the New Brunswick Botany Club and its

events, please contact Rick Fournier at (506) 737-5050 ext 5258 or at N.B. Botany Club email: rfournie@umce.ca



Toner quickly identifies the only plant in the landscape, Daring Lake, NWT May 2008



an awesome job and I am having lots of fun.

The opportunities that I experienced and the courses that I took while attending Acadia University provided the cornerstones with which I was eventually able to begin my career with. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to work with Soren Bondrup-Nielsen on my master's thesis that looked at moose habitat use on mainland NS. Soren's constant support and views of wildlife management gave me incentive to continue working with wildlife. Combined with the skills that I learned while working on various projects with the Wildlife Division in Kentville, I think that I was well positioned and prepared to work in the field of wildlife biology. The one thing that seems universal is that wildlife people everywhere know how to have a good time.

If you ever find yourself in Winnipeg, look us up and say hello. We would be happy to meet up with friends from the Maritimes.

ACADIA GRAD IN MANITOBA

By Dennis Brannen

Greetings from Manitoba! For those east coasters who have used the phrase "...but it's a dry cold", all I have to say is "it's still freakin COLD!"

So what brought me to Manitoba you might ask? Well, I was fortunate enough to be offered a new caribou biologist position with the Province of Manitoba (Manitoba Conservation). My family and I moved out here in July of 2007 and are enjoying our new home in Beausejour. Manitoba isn't Nova Scotia, but it has its own character. I am grateful to have two sons, Jacob (age 6) and Kieran (age 2) and my wonderful wife Emily.

I work out of the Regional office in Lac du Bonnet, which is approximately 1 hour northeast of Winnipeg and a ½ hour from my home. I am responsible for research and management of boreal woodland caribou (shadows of the forest) on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. As you may know, boreal woodland caribou are listed as a threatened

species, under SARA, across the boreal forest. We currently have 50 caribou collared with a combination of GPS and VHF collars. The majority of our captures are during the winter using net-guns from helicopter, but we also capture females in the summer on lakes with islands using lasso and boats. Our research attempts to better understand habitat use and movements at a landscape scale and to gain data on population dynamics. It is



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65 TURN OUT FOR NB INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES WORKSHOP

By Lucie Lavoie

On September 23rd, 2008, the first NB Invasive Plants Workshop was held at the Hugh John Flemming Centre, in Fredericton. The purpose of the workshop was to present current and local information on invasive plants, to promote the exchange and collection of NB invasive plant information and to discuss future initiatives.

The 65 participants included researchers, resources managers, governments, industry (e.g. horticultural) and non governmental agencies. The workshop began with an introduction to invasive plants in NB and continued through out the morning with presentations discussing invasive algae, nursery certification programs and a case study at the Kouchibouguac National Park. In the afternoon, talks included the Canadian Invasive Plant Framework, biocontrol of invasive plants, a case study of oil-seed crops followed by an example from Nova Scotia on how to involve the public in the scientific process. In the last part of the day participants brainstormed ideas in break out sessions on the invasive plant situation in NB and the potential for a provincial invasive plant council.

The workshop was funded by the Canadian Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program and by the NB Department of Natural Resources, with support from the University of New Brunswick, NB Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture, Nature Conservancy Canada and Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Details, results of the break out session discussions and survey and the recommended next steps will be available at:

www.unb.ca/herbarium/2008Workshop in the near future.

ORNITHOLOGISTS MET IN OREGON

Adapted from BSC news

11 August 2008 - More than 900 people flocked to the recent Portland OR joint conference of the American Ornithologists' Union, the Cooper Ornithological Society, and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists to learn about the latest developments and research in the field of avian ecology. Among the attendees was BSC staff member Becky Stewart of Sackville, NB, Coordinator of the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas. She and her colleagues working on Breeding Bird Atlas projects in

Canada and the U.S. (otherwise known as the North American Atlas Committee or NORAC), as well as ornithologists-at-large, attended the symposium "Using Breeding Bird Atlases to Enhance Conservation." It focussed on the value and application of atlas abundance data to biodiversity conservation. Andrew Couturier, Bird Studies Canada GIS analyst and the "man behind the maps" of the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas, presented a paper on the application of abundance data to biodiversity conservation

Earlier an all-day NORAC pre-conference workshop was co-chaired by Couturier and Dr. Charles Francis of Environment Canada. Discussions ranged from the purpose of an atlas, to developing appropriate standards for estimating relative abundance, to implementing urban and winter atlases. Staff from Maritimes, Ontario, and British Columbia atlas projects gave presentations. Becky presented on the logistics of running an atlas program and focussed on tools and approaches for managing a large volunteer base. (The Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas is the largest wildlife monitoring project in the Maritimes with 850 volunteers collecting breeding bird information).



Bridgetown NS Mike Parker of East Coast Aquatics Inc. found and photographed this Green frog with no rear legs just outside town on July 25th. Its deformity appeared to be a birth defect. Provincial specialist John Gilhen agreed and said such defects are sometime caused by salt water influence. The tide does reach as high as Bridgetown, although this two-legged beast was found some distance up a small tributary and about 500 metres above head of tide.

INSECTARY NOTES ONE GREAT READ

Clip this link and copy to your browser. [Http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/protection/ipm/InsectNotes/default.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/protection/ipm/InsectNotes/default.htm). Since the notes have gone electronic and on-line, the content is more circumspect, but a good laugh is still easy to find. Plus, learn about insects and other creepy- crawlers.

NEW BRUNSWICK ALLOWS SUNDAY HUNTING

From NB Gov't Web Site

New Brunswick became the 10th jurisdiction in Canada to allow Sunday hunting when Bill 43, received royal assent and became law. The amendment permits hunting on all Sundays that fall within the period of Oct. 28 — Nov. 17. Each year, there

will be three Sundays that fall in this period. Hunting is prohibited on all other Sundays.

Minster Donald Arsenault introduced the legislation in March saying "... this amendment .. will better reflect the current attitudes towards activities on Sunday and lessen the restriction on hunters. At the same time, we are balancing the needs of the non-hunting public by limiting the number of weekends. I'm proud of the compromise this bill proposes," he continued. "Most importantly, the

ATTACK SPIDER SCARES AWAY WOODPECKERS

It's worth checking out!

<http://www.attackspider.com/index.html>

proposed change will not affect wild-life management, conservation or sustainability."

Deer hunting season is by far the most popular hunting season, which is at its peak during these weeks. Also hunted during this time are bear, small game, grouse, furbearers and migratory birds. Adding Sunday for this limited time frame will enable an estimated 70,000 of the 80,000 licence holders more equitable opportunity for the sport. A few will be trying it out as the Biolink goes to press!

WAS ENVIRONMENT CANADA FAIR IN ITS CONTRACTS WITH PIPING PLOVER GUARDIAN GROUPS?

Sabine Dietz is the director of the Cape Jourimain Nature Centre. On July 10th she sent information to her mailing list as follows:

"As the Federal government finally announced the funding for Habitat Stewardship Program projects on June 23rd, we all heard the sigh of relief. Few of you may have followed what happened building up to this announcement, but you may know that Nature NB (Piper Project) and the Island Nature Trust spoke up in the media about the problems the delay in the Funding Announcement caused. CBC Charlottetown and Radio Noon out of Halifax carried the story. In this process, CBC approached Ottawa, and received a written statement that funding would be announced soon. Ottawa had received numerous calls, e-mails and complaints about this delay leading up to that day. On June 25th, project proponents were called.

The Island Nature Trust and Nature NB (Piper Project) were told they had received an almost 25% cut to their projects each. They are the only Piping Plover guardian groups in Eastern Canada that were cut in any form. Cuts are normal in the NGO world. If they are done fairly and transparently, it is acceptable. A call to senior CWS management in Ottawa revealed...that there is no explanation for this cut, no logical justification." Dietz summarized "Risking two of the most important programs in Eastern Canada like this is foolish to say it mildly. In case you were not aware, the Island Nature Trust "covers" 12% of the Eastern Canadian population of Piping Plover, and Nature NB (Piper Project) covers 20%. Combined this makes up a third of the entire Atlantic Canadian population."

Editors Comment: In September I had the opportunity to hear a spokesman from the Piper Project describe how he sustained his program to protect an endangered species by maxxing out his Mastercard while waiting for the EC funding to appear. Lets hope HSP grants will continue to exist and will be disbursed in a fair and timely manner.

FUND ESTABLISHED IN MEMORY OF GARETH AKERMAN

A fund has been established at Saint Mary's University in memory of Gareth. If you wish make a donation to the Gareth Akerman Memorial Fund at Saint Mary's University please contact:

Development Office
Saint Mary's University
Halifax NS B3H 3C3

Tel: 902-420-5496

Fax: 902-420-5140

Email: development.office@smu.ca

Charitable registration # 11918 9900 RR0001

PRESSURE DROP CAUSING WIND TURBINE BAT DEATHS

Excerpted from CBC story, August 25, 2008

Hundreds of bats found dead each year around wind turbines have suffered internal trauma from a sudden drop in air pressure at the turbine blades, according to Calgary researchers. University of Calgary graduate student Erin Baerwald said in a statement that while bats can detect turbines through their sonar-like echolocation ability, the same ability offers no protection from pressure drops.

"An atmospheric-pressure drop at wind-turbine blades is an undetectable — and potentially unforeseeable — hazard for bats, thus partially explaining the large number of bat fatalities at these specific structures," she said.

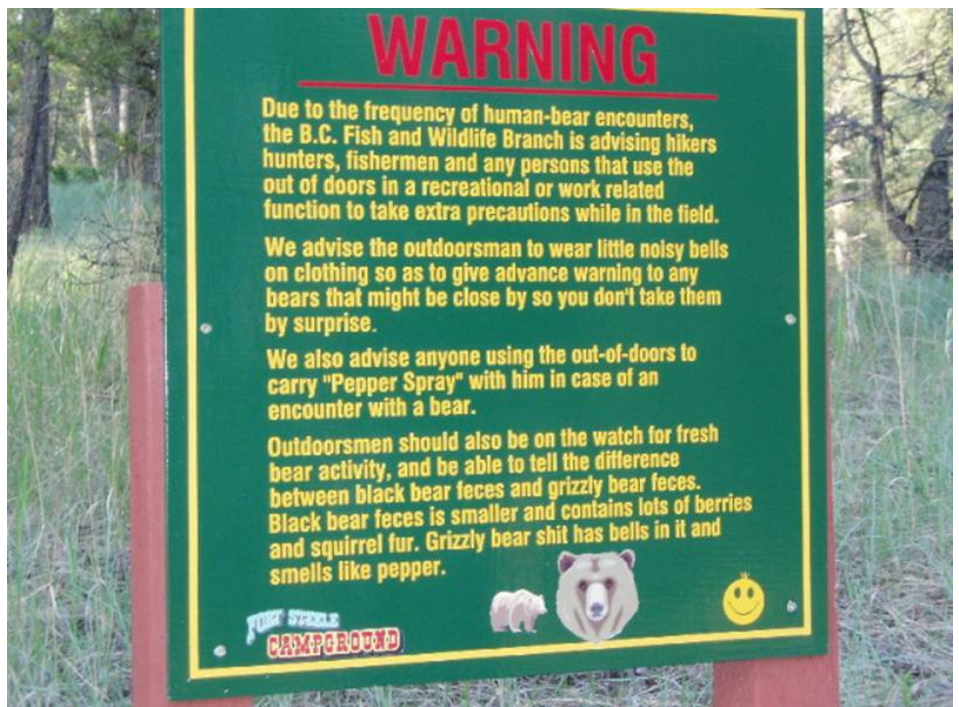
The condition, known as barotrauma, affects bats more than birds because bat lungs are balloon-like and can over-expand, bursting surrounding capillaries. Bird lungs are more rigid and tube-like and better able to with-

stand sudden changes in air pressure.

The spinning of a wind turbine's blade tends to increase air pressure as the wind comes to the blades, and then lower it dramatically in the blade's wake. Of 75 recently killed bats, post-mortem tests showed 69 had internal hemorrhaging but only 32 had external injuries. Detailed dissections of some of the bats revealed a host of internal traumas, from air-filled bubbles visible on the lung surface to lesions on the lungs consistent with barotrauma.

ASFWB SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTED IN ACADIA BULLETIN.

Following the establishment of the ASFWB Donald G Dodds Scholarship in 2007, the Spring 2008 Acadia Bulletin carried an expose of the Society, Dr. Dodds and the Scholarship. Please keep the scholarship in your thoughts and continue to donate to it to meet our goal of a \$25K fund.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

November 7th and 8th, 2008. **Rural Energy Action Conference and Trade Show (REACT 2008)** at the Port Hawkesbury NS Civic Centre

9:00 a.m., Saturday, November 15 to 1:00 p.m., Sunday, November 16, 2008 **.For Our Birds 2008: Sharing science, conservation and education about birds in Nova Scotia**, Rowe Management Building, Dalhousie University, Halifax Keynote address: Dr. Janis Dickinson, Director of Citizen Science at Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University. <http://ecologyaction.ca/coastal/birds/>

November 19-20 **GEOMATICS ATLANTIC 2008**, Saint John, NB. Discovering the Way to a Sustainable Future. (water level monitoring and forecasting; riparian buffer assessment using optimized classification method and GIS; using LiDAR to map floodrisk; etc). <http://www.geomaticsatlantic.com>.

December 3 - 4 (Wed and Thurs) 2008 **STEPPING UP:PLANNING FOR THE CHALLENGES OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN NS** . K.C. Irving Environmental Centre, Acadia University Wolfville, NS phone 902.585.1935 or marika.godwin@acadiu.ca

ASFWB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Date:

NAME :

TITLE:.....

AFFILIATION:.....

TELEPHONE: (H).....(O).....

MAILING ADDRESS:.....

.....
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REGULAR MEMBER (\$15): _____ STUDENT (\$5): _____

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