



Fredericton Nature Club/ Club de la nature de Fredericton

PO Box 772, Station A
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Newsletter

January - May 2014

**Dear
Fredericton Nature Club Members!**

This winter will be remembered for the craziest of Christmas Bird Counts. Driving wind, snow drifts up to the hips, and visibility that could hide a turkey vulture five feet away. Which explains why we did not see turkey vulture on this year's count. Well done to those that braved the elements and managed to conduct at least part of their count. Personally, I took a look at the driveway, the forecast, and the unplowed road, and bailed. The extent of my birding are the 2 pictures taken from inside my warm house - look carefully and you can almost make out the turkey vulture.

We have another Member's Night this winter, mainly to say thanks to our long-serving Treasurer - Joanne Stillwell. She has spent years keeping the Club fiscally-responsible and we are most grateful.

Our webpage: fnc.gbnature.com

FNC Executive

President: Graham Forbes
Treasurer: Jo-anne Stillwell
Membership: Vacant (G. Forbes)
Newsletter: Vacant (G. Forbes)
Publicity: Vacant (G. Forbes)
Nature NB Rep: Ruth Rogers
Meeting Host: Graham Forbes

Location and Meeting Times

Date: First Thursday of each month (starting in October)
Location: The Stepping Stone Centre
15 Saunders Street
Fredericton
(Across the road from old YMCA; lots of parking, easy access)
Time: Monthly meetings start at 7 p.m.

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Fredericton Nature Club Membership for 2013-2014

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- \$20 Individual Membership
 \$25 Family Membership

Please mail form to:

Fredericton Nature Club
PO Box 772, Station A
Fredericton NB E3B 5B4

Calendar of Events

Indoor Stuff

*All talks take place at
The Stepping Stone Centre, 7 p.m.*

January 10: Pictures of Australian Flora and Fauna I Took with the Camera I Stole from My Daughter

by Graham Forbes

Graham went to Hawaii, Queensland and Uluru and spent inordinate periods of time trying to get nice pictures

February 6: More Pictures of Australian Flora and Fauna....Undara and Armidale, and Guam

by Graham Forbes

Same as above, BUT, different pictures! Undara Lava Tubes....Gondwanaland Trees....A Dead Koala..and underwater Guam

March 6: Members Night by YOU!

We will have our photo contest, and a sendoff to our trusted Treasurer! Maybe, even cake?

April 3: A Student's Trip to Southern Africa

by Juliana Vantellingen

Julianna is a graduating student in the wildlife program at UNB and in summer 2013, spent several months in the game reserves of South Africa, trying not to get trampled by elephants!

May 1: Conservation Genetics

by Dr. Jason Addison

Jason works at UNB on the genetic aspects of ecology and conservation. He has worked on various marine invertebrates, as well as birds in Hawaii.



Outdoor Stuff

*Most outings begin at the Odell Park
parking lot. Times vary - check below.*

Saturday March 22: Jemseg Hawks

There have been lots of Snowy Owls in the region this winter, and we are hoping some have arrived for our trip..if not, maybe a few Rough-legged Hawks, or chickadees. Meet at Odell Park parking lot at 10am. Dress warmly and bring a lunch.

Saturday April 12: Annual Floodplain Folly

The Jemseg and Maugerville flats should be rather wet and the waterfowl in full bloom. Meet at the Odell Park parking lot at 11, bring a lunch.

Sunday May 4: Spring!

We will take a stroll through Odell Park in search of spring ephemerals, salamanders and everything else. Meet at Odell Park parking lot at 11.



First the disclaimer: the weather for count day this year was, in one word, horrible White out conditions sent most counters back home by noon, if they were able to venture out at all. We made the decision to stick to our count day as planned due to the logistics of having to reschedule another date for the many participants in our count. And it was a good call - the following Sunday brought somewhat worse weather with freezing rain.

The count results for Dec 15, 2013:

37 species with 4 addition count period species versus last year's 58 species and 2 count period birds. The total number of birds counted this year was 2112 compared to last year's number of 8762 equalling a difference of 6650 less birds seen this year! But what could be expected from a day where visibility became practically zero and the wet snow was freezing our eyelashes shut ?

Highlights (yes there were some) for this year included Fredericton's first CBC OVENBIRD. Peter Pearce had been hosting the bird for a few days beforehand and fortunately it stayed around for count day. It wasn't seen after that.

Don Gibson had 2 CAROLINA WRENS at his feeder on count day and they have remained there since. These hardy little wrens are defying the odds given the very cold weather they have faced this winter.

Owen Washburn's crew came across a CHIPPING SPARROW in their sector - another little bird that must be finding the weather to be a challenge for survival.

Other highlight birds include RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, NORTHERN SHRIKE, ROBIN plus count period COOPERS HAWK, RUFFED GROUSE, and BROWN CREEPER, and RED-TAILED HAWK.

Notable by their absence were Bald Eagle, Redpolls, Pine Siskin, and any Grosbeaks but the poor weather was mostly to blame for this

Data-wise, this year's count will probably be a historical low count for the Fredericton Christmas Bird Count. What most with our total numbers was the number of bird feeder reports. This is an area we will try to expand next year.

All-in all, given the weather conditions I would say that Count Day was a definite success

Thanks to all the participants who braved or attempted to brave that wintry day in order to help.

Ron Wilson
Fredericton CBC compiler



American Black Duck **5**

Mallard **210**

Ruffed Grouse **CW1**

Sharp-shinned Hawk **1+CW2**

Cooper's Hawk **CW1**

Red-tailed Hawk **CW1**

Ring-billed Gull **1**

Herring Gull **40**

Iceland Gull **2**

Great Black-backed Gull **250**

Rock Pigeon **101**

Mourning Dove **277**

Downy Woodpecker **27**

Hairy Woodpecker **23**

Pileated Woodpecker **1**

Red-bellied Woodpecker **1**

Northern Shrike **1**

Blue Jay **37**

American Crow **289**

Common Raven **51**

Black-capped Chickadee **217**

Red-breasted Nuthatch **5**

White-breasted Nuthatch **20**

Brown Creeper **CW1**

Carolina Wren **2**

American Robin **1+CW2**

OVENBIRD 1

European Starling **90**

Bohemian Waxwing **1+CW87**

American Tree Sparrow **11**

Chipping Sparrow **1**

Song Sparrow **7**

White-throated Sparrow **1+ CW1**

Dark-eyed Junco **12**

Snow Bunting **2**

Northern Cardinal **23**

Purple Finch **9**

House Finch **4**

American Goldfinch **385**

Hawk sp **1**

Sparrow sp **2**

Total Birds

2112

Total Species

37

Add.Spp. in Count Week

4

Hours on foot **15**

Hours by car **10**

Total Hours **25**

Kilometres on foot **28.5**

Kilometres by car **176**

Total kilometres **202**

No. of observers **24**

No. of parties **14**

No. of feeder reports **27**

'CW' refers to Count Week, which was December 9-16.



Some observations of New Brunswick in 1817-1822....

John Mann was an 18 year old labourer immigrant from Scotland who arrived at Partridge Island, Saint John in November 1817. He travelled around New Brunswick doing odd jobs (including assisting on the Canada-US boundary surveying near Woodstock), recording his travels, and observations. His first impression (near 'river Magegadavick') was a bit unfavourable:

“I was shocked at the dismal and wretched appearance of the country. From the severity of the winter, and the gloomy aspects which the woods and water presented, one would certainly conclude this to be a most excellent place for banishment.”

He paid to see a captive beaver, and felt the readers of his eventual book (published in Glasgow in 1824) would benefit from a description:

“This animal is about the size of a small dog, of a dark colour, and has a small head, and sharp nose and teeth: In running streams, these creatures will make large dams, by means of small trees, which they cut with their teeth. They live upon trouts, which they catch in these dams. In the winter season, they cut holes in the ice, through which they get above the water, and wander abroad, leaving one at hole, stirring it with its tail, to keep it from freezing...”

Beaver do not eat trout. Unfortunately, for posterity, or comedy, there is little record of the wildlife he saw, unless it related to what could be eaten - in fact, much of the book relates to trying to get fed at the scattered farmhouses he would pass while travelling. He had more luck finding food in the wild:

“I never witnessed such an abundance of trouts, some of them of great size. We fixed three hooks, each pointing in a different direction, and when the fish collected in clusters above them, by pulling the hook quick, we caught very many...meeting with a salmon hole, two of our best spearman went with their canoes, spears, and torches, and killed 37 in the same hole in one night, We put them in a barrel full of pickle taken off the pork, but it was not sufficient to cure them, and being far from any Settlement, we were obliged to throw them into the river.”

Mann lived in NB for several years, then travelled into New England and Quebec, before returning to remain in New Brunswick, near the place he thought was an excellent place for banishment. He died in 1891, aged 92.

John Mann 1824. Travels in North America. A. Young, Glasgow, Scotland [1978 reprint by St. Annes Point Press, Fredericton, NB]