

September-
December 2020

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Big-tooth Aspen (*Populus grandidentata*) leaf, autumn

Fredericton Nature Club Newsletter



Editor's Corner

Dear readers:

In spite of a half year under the shadow of the pandemic, hopefully many of you will have been able to enjoy nature during the spring, summer, and early fall. Fredericton Nature Club is thankful to all of you who renewed your membership in our club last year. At \$20 per member and \$25 per family, membership fees are really quite low, and we cannot rent our monthly meeting room at Stepping Stones without a healthy membership. Admittedly, members may feel short-changed given the cancellation of several meetings due to COVID-19. This is understandable. Work on this issue of the newsletter commenced in the early days of summer, but the editor has no idea what the "new normal" will look like for our Club during autumn 2020/winter 2021. Hopefully, meetings will resume and interest in our Club will remain strong.

Were some of you able to use the bibliography of "nature"/"natural history" e-books and audio recordings that appeared in the spring 2020 newsletter to pinpoint some interesting reading materials? All of those electronic resources are still available to you for free on the OverDrive platform from the New Brunswick Public Library Service, but now that libraries are open again, books, DVD's, and all the many other physical formats are available to you as well.

On a different front, the editor read with interest the NB Naturalist Feature: "Playbacks and Pishing: Update from the Restigouche Naturalists' Club and the Jacquet River Nature Group" dated April 9, 2020 by Mike Lushington. Lushington reports that Louis Berube researched this issue and presented his findings to both clubs. Lushington further writes, "We concluded by agreeing to the following protocol for the uses of playback devices and for pishing during our various group outings:

Chers lecteurs:

Malgré une demi-année à l'ombre de la pandémie, il est à souhaiter que la plupart de nos adhérents auront été en mesure d'apprécier la nature pendant le printemps, l'été, et l'automne. Le Club de la nature de Fredericton vous remercie tous qui ont renouvelé votre affiliation l'année dernière. La cotisation de \$20 per individu et \$25 per famille est certainement basse, et nous ne pouvons guère louer notre salle de rencontre à Stepping Stones sans une adhésion importante. Il est possible que nos membres se sentent trompés suite à l'annulation de plusieurs réunions grâce au Covid-19. C'est entendu. La rédaction du bulletin de notre Club a été entamée au début de l'été, mais votre rédacteur n'a aucune idée comment se présentera à notre Club la "normale nouvelle" pendant l'automne 2020/hiver 2021. Que le dévouement à notre Club demeure !

Y'en-avait il des adhérents qui ont utilisé la bibliographie de livrets et de livres audio portant sur le thème de la "nature"/"histoire naturelle qui a paru dans le bulletin du printemps 2020"? Toutes ces ressources électroniques empruntables gratuitement restent disponibles sur la plateforme OverDrive sur le site Web du Service des bibliothèques du Nouveau-Brunswick, mais les bibliothèques ont réouvert leurs portes, et des livres, des DVD's, et de nombreux autres formats physiques sont également disponibles.

Le rédacteur s'intéressait de lire dans le Naturaliste du N.-B., l'article de Mike Lushington du 9 avril 2020, intitulée "Reproduction des chants d'oiseaux et « pishing »: Mise à jour du Restigouche Naturalists Club et du Jacquet River Nature Group" Lushington rapporte que Louis Berube a fait des recherches sur ce problème et en a présenté les résultats aux deux clubs.

Current Executive

President: Graham Forbes

Webmaster: David Lilly

Treasurer: Andre Vietinghoff

Newsletter Editor: Andre Vietinghoff

The Fredericton Nature Club newsletter is published twice a year, spring & autumn



Autumn Meadowhawk
(*Sympetrum vicinum*)



White-Throated Sparrow
(*Zonotrichia Albicollis*)

1. We accept their use for formal research, such as owl surveys, formal counts, and other research when needed
2. We accept their use for educational purposes, should the need arise.

Otherwise, such practices will not be welcomed or encouraged. Our bottom line is that we do not wish to condone anything that may bring harm to the birds, or to compromise the aesthetic experience of the outing itself." Should the Fredericton Nature Club not have this discussion as well?

Finally, as noted in an email sent in June, whoever designed our club Logo, with the words, "Fredericton Nature Club/Club de la Nature de Fredericton" had the right understanding that New Brunswick is a bilingual province. Although only the editorial will be in English and French in this issue, it is the editor's opinion that if there are current or prospective members who would like to submit French language articles, this would not be to the detriment of the newsletter. However, a fully bilingual version is an ideal that requires the arduous work of translation and the willingness of competent translators to help out. Bilingualism is an issue that the Fredericton Nature Club might discuss at an opportune moment.

Happy reading!

Lushington écrit en plus, "Nous avons conclu en acceptant l'approche suivante pour l'utilisation des appareils de relecture et le « pishing » lors de nos différentes sorties de groupe:

1. Nous acceptons leur utilisation pour la recherche formelle, comme les recensements d'hiboux, les dénombrements officiels et d'autres recherches lorsque cela est mandaté par leur protocole.
2. Nous acceptons leur utilisation à des fins éducatives, le cas échéant.

Autrement, nous en sommes venu à la conclusion que ces pratiques ne seront ni recommandées ni encouragées dans le cadre de nos sorties. Essentiellement, nous ne souhaitons pas favoriser quoi que ce soit qui puisse nuire aux oiseaux, ou compromettre l'expérience esthétique de la sortie elle-même." Ne devrions-nous, le Club de la nature de Fredericton également discuter de la chose?

Enfin, comme signalé dans un courriel envoyé aux adhérents en juin, ceux qui ont créé le logo de notre Club, avec les mots, "Fredericton Nature Club/Club de la Nature de Fredericton" ont eu le bon entendement que le Nouveau-Brunswick est une province bilingue. Bien que l'éditorial seulement paraisse en anglais et en français dans ce numéro, à l'opinion du rédacteur ce ne sera pas au détriment du bulletin si des adhérents actuels ou prospectifs soumettent des articles en français. Pourtant, un bulletin cent pourcent bilingue est un idéal qui n'est pas réalisable sans un effort ardu de traduction et la bonne volonté et la participation de plusieurs bons traducteurs. Le Club de la nature de Fredericton devrait discuter du bilinguisme à l'avenir.

Bonne lecture!

My mystery weed / by Mary Pugh (club member)

I have a vegetable strip running along the back of my garden, unfortunately, of late, shaded by my neighbour's overgrown cedar hedge on the SE side. The strip was well dug in the spring, fed with marine compost and sown with a variety of peas and beans. In due course the sown vegetables germinated along with a variety of weeds, one (photo 1.) which I did not at first recognize. My suspicions were confirmed by Jim Goltz that it was an orchid, Broad Leaved Helleborine, *Epipactus helleborine*; a European native which is becoming widespread in N. America. Being an orchid, which I have seen growing in the UK, I allowed it to grow amongst my peas and beans to flowering. I had six plants with ten flowering spikes. Orchids have very fine seed but how did it get into my freshly dug vegetable patch and reach flowering maturity--that is the mystery.



Sharp-shinned Hawk
(*Accipiter striatus*)



Sharp-shinned Hawk



Horned Grebe
(*Podiceps auritus*), an occasional
migrant in New Brunswick



Young plant



Epipactus helleborine - Single plant



Epipactus helleborine
Several flowering plants amongst the peas

**Christmas bird counts:
Information on Audubon
website at:**

<https://netapp.audubon.org/cbcoobservation/#>

**Search by province and
locality. Both latest year
and historical
information available. Or
search by species.**



The yellow trees are Tamarack or American larch (Larix laricina) The needles of this conifer turn yellow in autumn before falling off.



Purple sandpiper (Calidris maritima) can apparently be found on rocky beaches very late in the fall

A Tale of Two Redheads / by Don Gibson (club member)

About mid-March as winter eases its grip on the landscape causing small ponds to form, it is amazing how quickly migrating ducks and geese find that open water. Soon the snowmelt and rain cause the Saint John River to spill into adjacent fields presenting an attractive venue for the returning waterfowl. The wide expanse of the river provides a good rest stop for ducks making the long migration to the arctic. About 25 species of ducks and geese can be tallied on the lower Saint John River during the spring. Identification is made easier due to the fact that the males are sporting their breeding plumage. While the discovery of any returning species is a treat, the joy of finding a rarity is hard to beat.

On April 12, 2020 I saw a pair of suspicious looking ducks on the river at Sheffield. The sun was in an unfriendly position and the silhouettes were difficult to identify. Upon shifting my viewing position I could now see a red head. It was the head of the male of the well named Redhead and he was accompanied by the drab plumaged female. Over the next few days, a lone male could be seen at close range in the fields at McGowan's Corner.

The Redhead, a common duck on the Canadian prairies, is considered a rare migrant and very rare summer resident in New Brunswick. Although confirmed breeding records for the province have been very scarce, there was a nest with eggs found at Jemseg in 2020. Sadly it was later predated.

Another duck with a bright red head that is considered a great find is the Eurasian Wigeon. As the name implies the Eurasian Wigeon is not a native of North America. Although seen regularly in the province, its numbers have not increased significantly. By pure coincidence, on April 21 I found a beautiful male a mere one kilometre from where I had discovered the Redheads. There was no evidence of an accompanying female.

Spring flooding in the Maugerville/Sheffield/Jemseg area provides some of the best birding we experience in this part of the province. Besides waterfowl, there is always a chance to see a rare egret/heron, ibis, shorebird or gull. During the past few years the flooding has on occasion been extreme and has limited access to birders but this inconvenience pales in comparison with the devastating losses residents have incurred. We can only hope that in the future the water levels will be high enough to attract waterfowl but yet not so high as to cause damage.

(Cont'd)

Club Financial Picture as of 1 October 2020

Previous Balance 4 Oct 2019
\$ 1,215.25

Revenues

Memberships to
20 March 2020 = \$ 495.00
Memberships for
2020/2021 so far = \$ 25.00
Balance = \$ 1,735.25

Expenses for 2019/2020

Meeting room (Stepping
Stone) = \$ 435.00
Webmaster's fee = \$ 130.00
- \$25.00 member = \$ 105.00
Club Membership Insurance
in Nature NB = \$ 102.50
Cheques ordered = \$ 19.52
Total Expenses = \$ 662.02

Balance

1 October 2020 = \$ 1,073.23



Yellow-rumped Warbler
(*Setophaga coronata*)



*Don's photographs of Redhead (Aythya americana) pair
on the Saint John River near Sheffield*



Brant
(Branta bernicla)



Brant



(Red) Maple leaves
(Acer rubrum)

Outing Report: Fredericton Nature Club Saturday 13 June 2020

- Sunny, moderate temperature starting at 12-13 degrees C in the a.m. going up to ca. 20-21 degrees at noon
- Met in Odell Park lower parking lot at 8:30
- 13 persons in attendance
- Dr. Graham Forbes, club president led outing: this was a bird outing
- Outing on old railroad track commencing at McMinnian Court on the Fredericton north side
- Walk started perhaps a bit after 9:15 ended around 11:45
- Species recorded
 - Mammals: Raccoon, Beaver, Muskrat, Red Squirrel, Groundhog
 - Reptiles & amphibians: Painted Turtle, Bullfrog
 - Insects: unidentified butterflies & dragonflies
 - Fish: (Dace?)
 - Birds: Canada Goose, Black Duck, Black Duck/Mallard hybrid, Great Blue Heron, Crow, Robin, Veery, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Alder Flycatcher, Belted Kingfisher, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Yellowthroat Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black & White Warbler, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Tree Swallow



Cedar waxwing (Bombycilla cedrorum) Cedar waxwings tend to stay into the autumn and sometimes into the winter.

Archives: As a club we should be interested in the preservation of our documents, and especially our newsletters. The editor contacted the New Brunswick Museum and the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. Although there was no response from the NBM, PANB expressed an interest in our documentation. Subsequently, club newsletters in electronic format, especially those created by our President, Dr. Graham Forbes, were sent to PANB. If there are among you those who have been very fastidious about keeping old printed copies going back to the early days of the club, it would be wonderful if the club could “borrow” these in order to photocopy them at the archives and deposit them there. This action should guarantee a permanent record of our documentation.

Nature NB is the umbrella organization for all nature clubs in New Brunswick but they are much more than that. Visit their website at: <http://www.naturenb.ca/home/> Because of the pandemic, the annual Festival of Nature—planned for Fredericton—did not occur. Their AGM was held online via Zoom. If any of our club members attended this AGM, perhaps at our next meeting, you could give us a 2- to 3-minute recap of important points raised at the AGM. The 2019 annual report for Nature NB is on their website.

Book Reviews

Your editor chose two e-books listed in the bibliography of the spring 2020 issue of the Fredericton Nature Club newsletter to review:

Darwin, Charles. [The Voyage of the Beagle](#) [electronic resource]. Duke Classics, 2012.

You naturalists may be laughing at your Rip Van Winkle reviewer for having chosen a renowned classic by one of the geniuses of the modern era. However, it was too daunting a challenge for me as a teenager to read this work, and perhaps for some of you as well. After all, Darwin was the founder of the serious theories of origin of species and of natural selection. Amazingly, this early work, originally published in 1839 as Darwin’s Journals and remarks, and capturing the second survey expedition of the HMS Beagle under the captainship of Captain Robert FitzRoy, is highly readable. The article in Wikipedia states, “The book is a vivid travel memoir as well as a detailed scientific field journal covering biology, geology, and anthropology that demonstrates Darwin’s keen powers of observation, written at a time when Western Europeans were exploring and charting the whole world.” The parts that I found most interesting were Darwin’s description of plants, animals, and especially of people that he encountered, but I glossed over many of his forays into geology and paleontology. Very rarely does the author diverge from objectivity in his description of the natural world, but does call a South American rattler an ugly brute. Much of the book is a circuit of South America from Brazil, Argentina including Patagonia, Chile and Peru as well as Galapagos and other islands. Other chapters cover places like St. Jago-Cape de Verde Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand, Van Diemen’s Land, Cocos Islands, and Mauritius at which the HMS Beagle stopped on its way back to England. Anyhow, if like your reviewer, you are almost 200 years behind in your reading, this is a notable read from the annals of natural history.

Rustad, Harley. [Big Lonely Doug](#) [electronic resource]: [The Story of One of Canada's Last Great Trees](#). House of Anansi Press. 2018. This is the fascinating account of the discovery and preservation of a giant Douglas Fir. The following is from the teaser in OverDrive: “On a cool morning in the winter of 2011, a logger named Dennis Cronin was walking through a stand of old-growth forest near Port Renfrew on Vancouver Island. His job was to survey the land and flag the boundaries for clear-cutting. As he made his way through the forest, Cronin came across a massive Douglas fir the height of a twenty-storey building. It was one of the largest trees in Canada that if felled and milled could easily fetch more than fifty thousand dollars. Instead of moving on, he reached into his vest pocket for a flagging he rarely used, tore off a strip, and wrapped it around the base of the trunk. Along the length of the ribbon were the words ‘Leave Tree.’ When the fallers arrived, every wiry cedar, every droopy-



Bald Eagle
(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*),
Juvenile



Bald Eagles, adult and juvenile



(Red) Oak Leaf
(*Quercus rubra*)

topped hemlock, every great fir was cut down and hauled away — all except one. The solitary tree stood quietly in the clear cut until activist and photographer T. J. Watt stumbled upon the Douglas fir while searching for big trees for the Ancient Forest Alliance, an environmental organization fighting to protect British Columbia's dwindling old-growth forests. The single Douglas fir exemplified their cause: the grandeur of these trees juxtaposed with their plight. They gave it a name: Big Lonely Doug. The tree would also eventually, and controversially, be turned into the poster child of the Tall Tree Capital of Canada, attracting thousands of tourists every year and garnering the attention of artists, businesses, and organizations who saw new values encased within its bark." This is a beautifully written, short work of just over one hundred pages that was a finalist for many Canadian book awards. Highly recommended

Your editor also chose two other books available at the public library to review

Alexander, Jane. Wild Things, Wild Places: Adventurous Tales of Wildlife and Conservation on Planet Earth. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 330 p. ISBN 9780385354363

Who is Jane Alexander? She is a Tony Award and two-time Emmy Award winning actress * who has also received Oscar and Academy Award nominations; a former director of the National Endowment for the Arts (U.S.) a former trustee of the Wildlife Conservation Society, a commissioner of New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and a member of the board of the Audubon Society. Alexander also happens to be a birdwatcher.

Birds have enthralled Alexander since childhood. In a chapter, "Birds" she describes her early fascination with the song of the Wood Thrush and her later participation in birding marathons. In a chapter on Bhutan, she discusses sightings of Black-necked Cranes, Rufous-necked Hornbills, and above all the Monal Pheasant—the bird Alexander most wanted to see. Indeed the topic of birds crops up again and again throughout Wild Things, Wild Places. As an adult, Alexander consciously chose birdwatching as the hobby most suitable to her travelling lifestyle.

However, in this paean to wildlife, biodiversity, and nature conservation, birds are far from the only topic. Part 1. Tiger Man focuses on conservation of wild cats in various countries. The author and her husband visit Alan Rabinowitz, a biologist who becomes instrumental in conservation of Jaguars in Belize, Tigers in Thailand, and other wildcats elsewhere. The latter part of the book is a litany of places that the author has visited and of the wildlife viewed there. She writes clearly about global threats to wildlife and nature in many countries and in the ocean.

If there is one weakness, it is that the author occasionally strays from a theme. However, Alexander's writing style is simple, charming, and very accessible, and her enthusiasm for the natural world and for conservation is boundless. This is a book that does not have to be read from beginning to end; open it at any chapter for a new natural history adventure. Wild Things, Wild Places is highly recommended reading for naturalists, conservationists, and anyone else interested in these topics.

Wild Things, Wild Places can be found at Fredericton Public Library under 333.95416 ALE. If currently on loan, you have the option of putting a hold on it

Annual membership, Fredericton Nature Club:

\$20.00 per individual
\$25.00 per couple/family

Send a completed membership form found on our website at:

<http://www.frederictonnatureclub.com/membership.html>

Send a cheque to the Treasurer at:
Andre Vietinghoff
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Canada Goldenrod
(*Solidago canadensis*)

Images/photos in this issue not identified are public domain images derived from Google Images. Species represented are ones found in our province.

either via the New Brunswick Public Library System website under your own login, or in person at the downtown library circulation counter.

- See Wikipedia for more information on her acting career.

Mabey, Richard. *The Cabaret of Plants: Forty Thousand Years of Plant Life and the Human Imagination*. New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015. 373 pages. ISBN 9780393239973.

The author loves wildflowers and other wild plants but his qualifications are not those of a botanist but rather of a professor of literature in England. In this respect, the subtitle keywords, “human imagination” are a key to the interdisciplinary nature of this work. Though abounding in botanical information, in many chapters *The Cabaret of Plants* links botanical passion and knowledge to various other themes including photography, mythology, literature, art, and civilization in general. Other chapters explore how the hunt for exotic flowers developed in the British Isles and elsewhere--among these Victoria amazonica, an exotic water lily from the Amazon and *Selenicereus wittii* or Moonflower that an intrepid British artist, Margaret Mee, was finally able to locate and paint in bloom. An entire section of the book is devoted to the cult of trees such as Yew, Baobab, Sequoia, and Oak. A final somewhat skeptical chapter on the hunt for plant intelligence makes interesting reading. The quality of the writing is rich and chapters are enhanced by colour illustrations.

Cabaret of Plants is available from the New Brunswick Public Library System under 580.9 MAB



Canada Geese
(*Branta canadensis*)



Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) on Michaelmas Daisies (*Aster Amellus*) Photograph taken in Gagetown by club member, **Mary Pugh**