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VOLUME 15, NO. 1
WINTER 2005/06

A Walk In The Woods

*NSFAH Annual
Fundraising A Success*

Random Casts

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**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS**



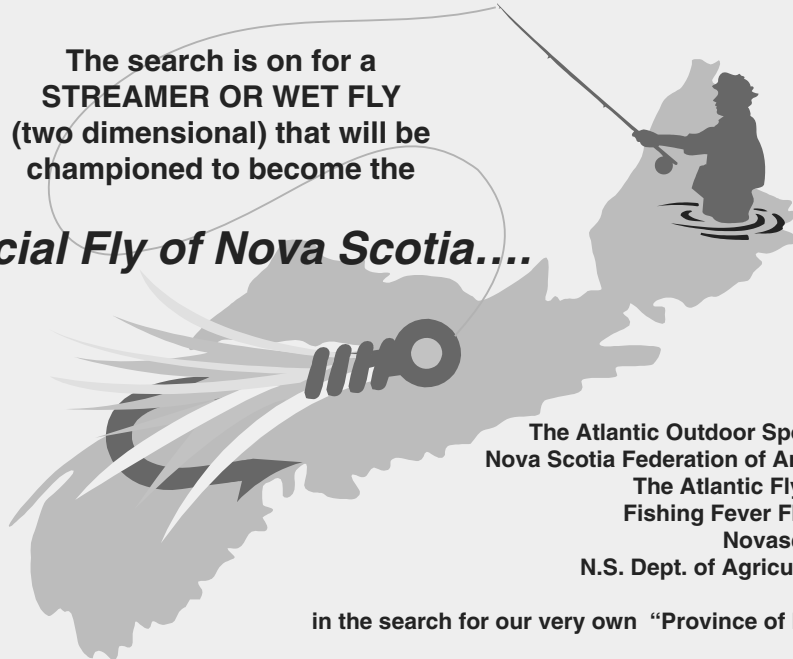
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Atlantic Fly Fishing School



NOVA OUTDOORS

WINTER 2005

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To place your ad in the next issue (Spring, 2006) of Nova Outdoors, please call (902) 468-6112, or call Tony Rodgers of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters at (902) 477-8898.

Nova Outdoors

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Nova Scotia Federation
of Anglers and Hunters



Nova Scotia Federation of
Anglers & Hunters

Vol. 15, No. 1
Winter 2005/06
**STATEMENT
OF PURPOSE**

The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters is interested in all aspects of the out-of-doors and is dedicated to the fostering of sound management and wise use of the renewable resources of the Province. We want to ensure that their economic, recreational and aesthetic values may continue for the benefit of this and all future generations.

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President's Message

By Darlene Caldwell



Nova Scotia Federation of
Anglers & Hunters

page in the masthead.

You need not be a hunter, angler or trapper in order to be a supporter of the NSFAH.

"We care". I find it amazing just how many people do not realize that we are the ones striving relentlessly for the conservation of wildlife and habitat. We work together with government and other organizations to help ensure that our "statement of purpose" is fulfilled. We have a voice in the prosecution of poachers and other offenders to the wildlife act. The NSFAH makes a difference.

I am honoured to be a part of this Federation. As a female, I of course have many friends that are women. None of whom hunt, but through our friendship and learning about my personal ethics, etc., support me wholeheartedly as a hunter. They understand that I am a conservationist. It's all about education. There are so many misconceptions out there it is astonishing.

One of my own personal goals has always been to help change these "mis-

conceptions". My experience is that it can be done. I know because I have done so. It all takes time and certainly does not happen overnight.

I have only a little more than a year left as your President. Therefore, I am asking for your help. There's an old saying "It takes a village to raise a child." Get involved and make a difference. We need your support so that we may continue our work on your behalf. The NSFAH is your voice, addressing issues and concerns that otherwise would remain silent.

One of our past presidents summed it up quite nicely once by saying "Agree to disagree".

It's virtually impossible to please all the people all the time. We need to keep in mind who we are and not forget the big picture and move forward, always move forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Hon. Richard Hurlburt for his donation to the NSFAH. This will help us to continue our work in conservation.

I also wish to thank our Executive Director, Executives, Directors and all of our members for their continued support and kindness. I truly hope the holidays and the New Year bring both you and yours health, happiness and prosperity ... until next time.*

*Yours in conservation,
K. Darlene Caldwell*



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Executive Director's Voice



By Tony Rodgers

"Speaking with one voice" is the phrase that ran through my mind when I listened to federal politicians recently jousting once again for a federal election – the election is called for Jan. 23, 2006.

Why speaking with one voice? Well, it's because as a fraternity, we have failed to speak as one when it comes to delivering a strong message to our candidates. As an anglers and hunters organization, for the most part we got it together and tend to speak the same message and raise the same problems and make the same requests, but when it comes to putting the X on the ballot, we fail to support people who represent our views.

As a hunter or gun owner, you would have to have been sleeping under a pretty heavy rock not to get up on your feet and state your argument against the need for the current firearms legislation. But, we have had three federal elections since the legislation was introduced, passed and rammed down our throats but the party that gave it to us is still in power.

Why? Because we didn't support the people who said they would make changes for us. There was always that doubt that they were liars, not realizing the lying had already taken place from the mouths of the governing Liberal party. When I would ask someone if they would share how they voted the quote would be "I always vote Liberal because my mother and father always voted Liberal so I'll continue to do so". Yes, believe it or not in many discussions I've heard, this is a common excuse for not defeating the government. I guess it's better the devil you know.

That's what I mean by "speaking with one voice". If all we are willing to do is make threats via our anglers and hunters groups, all we can expect is more of the same.

The second most used excuse for not voting the government out is "my vote wouldn't count anyway, I'm just one person". Well that is a sad statement.

As a block of voters, hunters and anglers could, if they put their energies together, become the single most influential voice in the province.

I recently spoke to a person in Natural Resources in Halifax about the change over from the Hunter Firearms Card (orange card) to the new Wildlife Resources Card. The change was needed to weed out from the 250,000 names in their system who are still the hunters in the province.

The old orange cards didn't have an expiry date. Therefore, anyone in the system stayed in the system. People who have passed away, military and RCMP personnel who once served here and moved away to other provinces, and those who decided not to participate in the sport any longer remained on the books as qualified or trained hunters.

At this point in the change over, some 64,000 people have already requested their new cards to keep themselves current. The card is free to hunters simply by calling 1-888-729-2917 up until the end of 2005. After that, there will be a charge. Future five-year renewals of the card will also cost about \$5 to \$6.

But I digress ... 64,000 hunters (and counting) represents 7 percent of the provincial population, a group larger than

many single interest groups in the province.

Political pundits will tell you that a simple swing of 4 percent in most ridings will swing the vote.

However, what it comes right down to is getting those 7 percent out of the tree stands to the polls to get the job done.

I hate getting phone calls from hunters who are suffering from the effects of this firearm legislation. Most of them are seniors. I know that it has torn the very soul out of good men and women who will not hunt fearing that they may be going something wrong and don't want to go through the embarrassment of getting a wildlife ticket. In most cases, it's just their imagination, but in many more it's real because they chose not to license themselves.

It's not only the question about the \$2 billion waste on the firearms laws that have to be challenged at the polls; there are other pieces of legislation. Bill C 50, the government's animal cruelty bill, is being debated in the house now. The government is trying to send it to the committee before debating it at second reading. This has the ability to have all changes made in committee and returned to the house for second and third readings. The changes may be harmful to us because the agendas of the anti hunting/fur-farming crowd is being heard in committee.

Lead sinker legislation, endangered species legislation, explosives legislation (affects black powder hunters) are all federal issues that will have an impact on the future of angling and hunting.

In Nova Scotia we have the proposed
Continued on page 8.

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OPPORTUNITIES

Habitat Conservation Projects Approved

Department of Natural Resources

Projects that will help restore plant and flora habitat and help protect the roseate tern and river otter are among the 14 wildlife conservation projects approved for a total of almost \$106,000 in funding under the province's Habitat Conservation Fund this year.

The fund — which is generated through the required purchase of a \$2 wildlife habitat stamp on all hunting licenses in Nova Scotia — is designed to help finance projects that protect and enhance wildlife habitats.

Projects can receive up to 75 per cent on a cost-shared basis, to a maximum of \$25,000, but must fall into one of four categories: purchase of land for the benefit of wildlife, habitat improvement, wildlife habitat research and related education programs.

"Hunters in Nova Scotia support this fund, that is used to sustain our wildlife and wildlife habitat," said Richard Hurlburt, Minister of Natural Resources. "All of the funds collected are used directly for habitat conservation."

Since the program was initiated in 2001, almost \$500,000 has been directed to wildlife conservation.

The project applications are reviewed and recommendations are made by an independent board of directors consisting of members from hunting, naturalist and academic associations.

The fund has been getting more requests each year and many worthy projects go unfunded. As a result, the fund's board

of directors requested an increase in the fee for the wildlife habitat stamp from \$2 to \$3. The change will be effective for this fall's hunting season.

Applications for the 2006 Habitat Conservation Fund can be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources, wildlife division, between Dec. 1, 2005 and Jan. 31, 2006. Submission guidelines and application forms can be obtained from any Department of Natural Resources office or on the website at www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/habfund <<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/habfund>> .

Information on the 2005 recipients and on past projects is also available on this website.

Successful projects and recipients of funding for 2005 are:

- Small Marsh Restoration in Annapolis Valley, Ducks Unlimited
- Mercury in River Otter, Sarah Spencer
- Mahone Bay Roseate Tern Habitat Recovery Project, Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation
- Woodcock Habitat Enhancement Project, Woodcock Conservation Society
- Coastlines Natural History Col-

umn, Ecology Action Centre

— Habitat Friendly Farming, Clean Annapolis River Project

— Plants on the Edge: Securement and Stewardship of Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora Habitat (Phase 2), Nova Scotia Nature Trust

— Kings County Riparian Fencing Project, Friends of the Cornwallis River Society

— Wildlife and forage-quality benefits of a late-maturing hay cultivar, Soren Bondrup-Nielsen

— Conservation of critical lakeshore habitat in the Tusket River watershed, Sara Good-Avila

— Community Education Through Awareness, Cape Sable Important Bird Area Committee

— The utility of eastern pipistrelles as indicators of landscape level change at large spatial and temporal scales, Hugh Broders

— Adopt-A-Class Wetland Education Project, Ducks Unlimited

— Role of Riparian Buffers in Forest Bird Conservation, Cindy Staicer.*

~ See page 19 for application information for 2006.

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"Each time history repeats itself, the price goes up."

—Ronald Wright



Not a day goes by when someone doesn't make reference to the questionable things that we do to our planet. Our society has been very hard on the natural environment, especially in recent times.

This past spring while enjoying some of my favourite Appleton chocolates, I was given a book to read during the relaxed summer season. After discussing the trends of our recent history Allan felt that I would enjoy it - A Short History of Progress by Ronald Wright. The book is written based on the Massey Lectures Series, co-sponsored by CBC Radio and has aired on the radio show "Ideas" series in November, 2004.

The book takes a critical look at past civilizations, with respect to how they treated their natural environment - and each other - and what ultimately happened to them. Wright describes the human history as an ongoing experiment that is moving very quickly on a colossal scale. For instance, in less than a century the world's population has multiplied by four. Its economy - a reflection of the human impact on nature - has increased by more than 40. He argues that we must

bring the experiment under control to guard against present and future dangers. Since we have the power to make the necessary decisions, it is up to us. If we fail to do so, we could likely blow it up or degrade the biosphere so it can no longer sustain us. As Wright states, "Nature will merely shrug and conclude that letting apes run the laboratory was fun for a while but in the end, a bad idea."

The book sadly acknowledges that thus far mankind has caused so many extinctions of various plants and animals, that our time on earth will appear in the fossil record as similar to the effect of an asteroid collision. If we keep going on the road we have been travelling for the last 100 years or so, the long term effect will be much worse, perhaps similar to the large asteroid that brought the dinosaurs to their knees.

Did you ever stop to think how fortunate we are to be living in this modern era? When one considers all the obstacles, dangers and possibilities of the past for our forefathers not surviving, it is truly incredible that we are some of the lucky survivors. History has shown that, in general, nice folk didn't usually survive in earlier, more dangerous times. Wright states the case that, "We are at best the heirs of many ruthless victories and at worst, the heirs of genocide. We may well be descended from humans who repeatedly exterminated rival humans - culminating in the suspicious death of our Neanderthal cousins some 30,000 years ago."

The use of the land for feeding ourselves started roughly 10,000 years ago. Environmental conditions have been relatively stable over that period of time which has made it possible for the evolution of agriculture to occur so that it could feed the expansion of civilization.

Before this period of time the earth's climate would sometimes

fluctuate wildly - breaking from an ice age, or plunging into one - not over centuries but in decades. Since that time, humans have been making the most of the good growing and living conditions, despite the few blips along the way such as huge volcanic eruptions which have blocked sunlight for extended periods.

Our civilization would be better off with a stable climate. However, science is showing us how we are upsetting the environmental balance which seems to be having detrimental impacts. Through fossil fuel emissions and other man-caused disturbances, we are causing the break up of ice sheets at both poles and the thawing of glaciers in the tallest mountain chains. Droughts and unusually hot weather, intermingled with damaging hurricanes and floods, has caused world grain output to fall or stagnate for nearly a decade. During that same period of time the world population increased by 800 million. If we completely upset the climatic balance - back to what it was like 10,000 years ago - of extreme highs and lows - crops will fail everywhere, and so will we.

The last sabre tooth tiger; the last mammoth; the last dodo; and soon perhaps the last gorilla and fish. As Wright views it, "on the basis of what police call "form," we are serial killers beyond reason."

Although there are many examples of previous civilizations crashing due to their own greed or poor decisions of the past, he asks if we are doomed for the same. He strongly feels that we must learn from previous civilizations to not repeat similar mistakes. Whether it be poor farming practices causing repeated soil erosion, overuse of soil, livestock denuding once lush landscape, or polluting once clean waters, there are innumerable things to be learned from previous civilizations.

As time goes by the potential consequence of our inaction grows in severity. As Wright points out, "the collapse of the first civilization on earth - the Sumerian - affected only half a million people. The fall of the Roman Empire affected tens of millions. If ours were to fail, it would of course, bring catastrophe on billions.*

Don Cameron is a Registered Professional Forester.

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Individuals Charged Under Endangered Species Act

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources

Eight people will appear in provincial court in December to answer to charges of hunting mainland moose.

The charges are the result of a focused investigation by Department of Natural Resources' conservation officers to protect mainland moose, which were declared an endangered species in 2003.

"Officers gathered intelligence on complaints and suspected illegal moose-hunting activities, which resulted in a detailed project entitled Operation Crossroad," said Natural Resources enforcement director John Mombourquette. "Twelve officers from across the province have been working on this operation for more than two years."

Illegal harvesting of mainland moose is believed to be one of the primary fac-

tors in the diminishing size of the herd in Nova Scotia.

Six of the individuals charged are from Guysborough County, one is from Pictou County and one is from Cumberland County.

A conviction under the Endangered Species Act can carry a fine of up to \$500,000 and a prison term of up to six months. *

Executive Directors Voice...

Continued from page 5

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) changes and many people calling for the banning of ATVs in all parks and protected places.

All of the Wilderness Protected areas were to have their own individual management plans in order to address the concerns of everyone involved. The locals in which the area is located should have a chance to express this point of view on how that area should be used. It's too easy to sit in Halifax and say keep ATVs out.

This legislation has been in place since 1998 and only two of the 32 areas have had any sort of work done on the management plans. I hope government doesn't believe that those two will be templates for all of the rest of the sites. Those shoes may not fit.

As an example of why it is imperative that these plans be developed soon is the Cape Breton Highlands, where blocking the use of ATVs in the highlands will have a negative impact on the whole environment up there.

Because of the large numbers of moose in the highlands, many of the protected areas are being eaten to the ground by these very large herbivores. ATVs are needed by hunters to get into these remote areas to harvest moose so that the number of animals doesn't grow too great to exceed its carrying capacity of the land. If ATVs are stopped from getting in then

get ready for a drop in hunter participation in those areas and a predicted increase of moose and a further decline in the habitat. That does not make for wise use of the resource.

I agree you have to control where these ATVs can go, but that is what a management plan would do. Manage those questions. Again, this is just one example.

I'm cautious of actions done for my own good, that's why I'll never stop questioning these good intentions.

It's once again time for the speech. Join political parties and participate in their meetings. Make sure you and your sport are being heard at the grass roots. Help them develop and make policy.

Get involved with your local anglers and hunters club. The same goes for helping them develop positions that help both the environment/wildlife and protect your hunting and angling opportunities.

Hunting and angling clubs should be the front lines on the defense of your sport at the local level ensuring that municipal governments are not trying to enact by-laws that will negatively impact you, but if you're not inside you can't have your say.

These clubs for the most part spend their time doing positive things for nature and looking out for lies being spread by the anti-hunting groups that will harm your participation in angling and hunting.

There will be plenty of fights ahead for all of us with people who seek to end our sports so it's important we spend our energies on them. Hunters arguing with other hunters over anything like equipment used or the species they hunt works only into the hands of the antis.

Please be careful during the rest of the hunting season and stick up for your sport. Hunters and Anglers pay for conservation in Canada and we have no reason to hide in the shadows about it. I'm a proud angler and hunter and I hope you are too. *

tonyrogers@eastlink.ca

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Random Casts

Great White Sharks

By Don MacLean

The report of an angler hooking a white shark off the coast of Antigonish last summer has renewed interest in this species. Ever since the movie *Jaws* shocked theatergoers 30 years ago with its story of a great white shark terrorizing a seaside town, this fish has fascinated people like no other.

White sharks, or as they are commonly known, great whites, are found throughout

the world and, contrary to their name, only their belly is white, the rest of their body is gray or black. White sharks have been reported off the coast of the four Atlantic provinces but are not often found near our coastline. The fish off Antigonish was an exception but other white sharks have also been caught or reported over the years. One fish, five meters in length, was caught in a net off Prince Edward Island in 1983. Other white sharks have been caught in the Bay of Fundy and one attacked a dory off Fourchu on Cape Breton Island in 1953 which led to the drowning of a fisherman. That fish,

which became known as the Fourchu Rammer, was never caught but was identified from teeth left in the wood of the dory.

Great whites can tolerate wide ranges in water temperature from near Arctic conditions to sub-tropical and are found in waters with depths ranging from the surface down to over 1,000 meters as they pursue food. These big fish do not usually come close to our shoreline except in the summer and fall when they are attracted by plentiful food such as herring and mackerel. White sharks prey on a variety of food items such as salmon, hake, halibut, mackerel and tuna as well as harbour porpoises and seals. However, they have also been known to eat other sharks, sea turtles and sea birds. One white shark, caught off Deer Island in the Bay of Fundy in 1971, was found to have three porpoises, all with their tails bitten off, in its stomach.

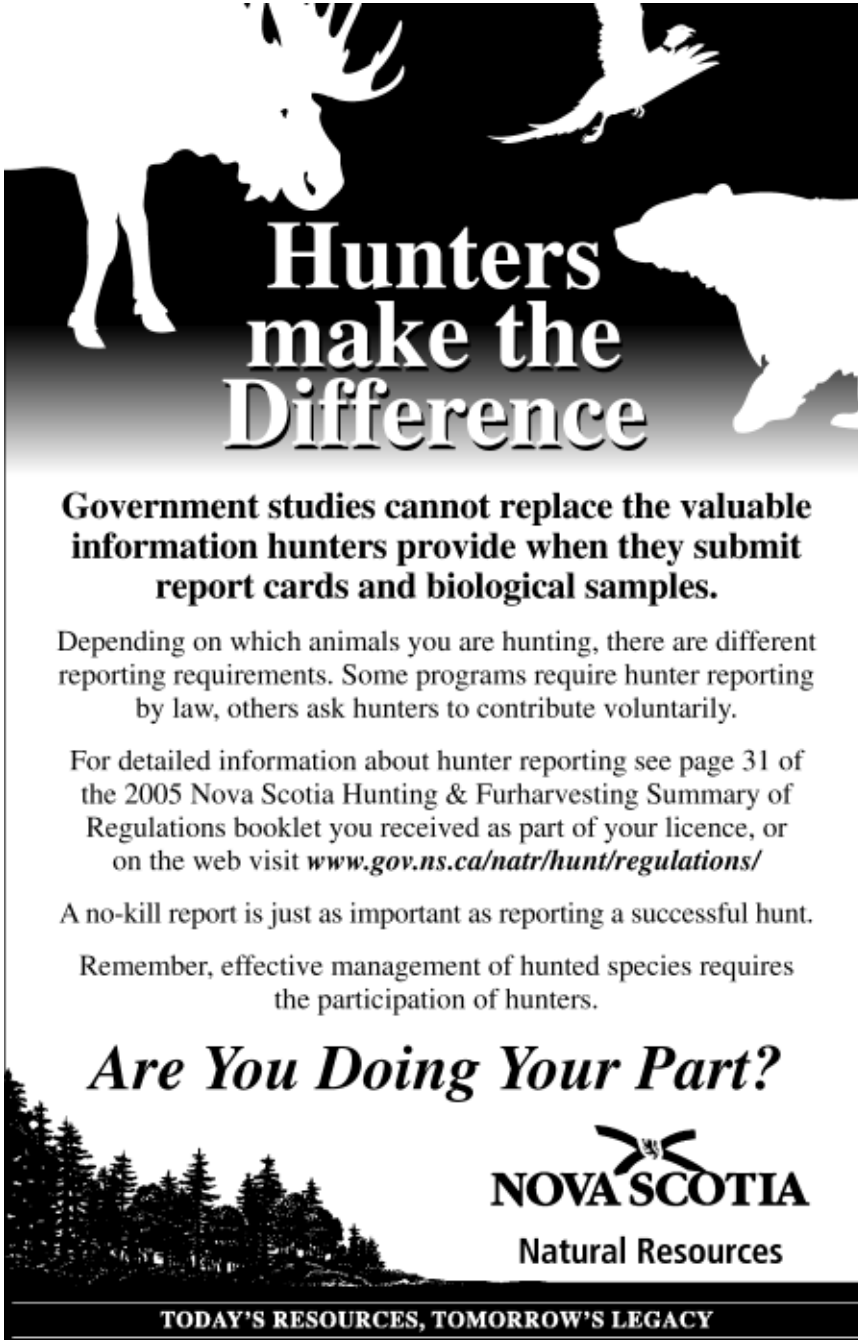
Great whites can reach some impressive sizes, especially off the coast of Australia, where fish up to eight meters in length have been reported. The average size for this fish, however, is around four meters. A shark that size would weigh around 1,500 lbs. White sharks are believed to be fairly slow growing, long lived fish. Females mature around 12 years of age and give birth to up to 14 pups at a time.

They are such infrequent visitors to our shores that every report raises quite a bit of interest but the chances of ever encountering one are extremely rare. However, the fact that they are so rare adds to their appeal, at least it does to me. In their book on marine fishes of Atlantic Canada authors, Scott and Scott described the white shark as follows: "A large, roving, solitary predator whose overall biology, including regular movements or migrations, is not well known." The fact that we know so little about this great fish adds to their mystery. *

Tight Lines

Don MacLean is a Nova Scotia biologist who writes on sportfishing topics. His book, Discover Nova Scotia Sportfishing, was published in 2003.

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**Hunters
make the
Difference**

Government studies cannot replace the valuable information hunters provide when they submit report cards and biological samples.

Depending on which animals you are hunting, there are different reporting requirements. Some programs require hunter reporting by law, others ask hunters to contribute voluntarily.

For detailed information about hunter reporting see page 31 of the 2005 Nova Scotia Hunting & Furharvesting Summary of Regulations booklet you received as part of your licence, or on the web visit www.gov.ns.ca/natr/hunt/regulations/

A no-kill report is just as important as reporting a successful hunt.

Remember, effective management of hunted species requires the participation of hunters.

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Winter BOW, Come out Fishing!

By Tara Crandlemere

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW®) is a workshop primarily aimed at women and is an opportunity for anyone 18 years or older to learn outdoor skills - skills usually associated with hunting and fishing, but useful for many outdoor pursuits.

BOW® is active in most states and provinces. It was started in 1991 in response to the recognition that barriers exist, which discourage women from participating in some outdoor activities. All sessions are at an introductory level and equipment is provided. Instructors are specifically chosen for their experience and ability to create a comfortable and fun learning environment.



Photo above shows a Family ice fishing.

The popularity of the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman® workshop continues to grow. Since 1997, we have had more than 450 women participate in one or more workshops. Now we have more than 1000 women in the database. The program's partners are Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters and Cross Country Ski Nova Scotia.

We had a very successful fall workshop this year and are preparing for the winter BOW® in Cape Breton. The winter BOW workshop will be held at the Nova Scotia Gaelic College of Arts and Crafts in St. Ann's on February 17-19, 2006. Some of the winter workshop classes are ice fishing, cross country skiing, winter camping, wild edibles in win-

ter, winter travel, and winter tracking and survival.

Winter angling opportunities in Nova Scotia are endless. For those who love the outdoors, ice fishing is an ideal winter sport. In response to a growing interest in the provinces' winter sportfishery the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has continued to expand winter angling opportunities in the province for stocked rainbow trout, chain pickerel, white and yellow perch.

A recent survey on sportfishing in Canada found that Nova Scotia anglers spend an average of 9.5 days angling during the winter; the highest in the country. Fishing licenses for 2005 are valid until March 31, 2006. The bag limit for rainbow trout during the winter fishery is two (2) per day, and for chain pickerel, white and yellow perch, twenty-five (25), per day.

If you have never experienced the fun ice fishing brings, sign up for the Winter BOW® program and learn at an introductory level: angling gear required for ice fishing, how to make a hole in the ice, winter fishing seasons, species targeted, bag limits and safety procedures when going onto ice, proper footwear and clothing.



Little boy ice fishing.

The program runs from the evening of Friday February 17, 2006 to 1 p.m. on Sunday February 19, 2006 at the NS Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts on St. Ann's Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The college is situated on a beautiful, wooded peninsula, jutting into St.

Ann's Harbour. The facility provides a comfortable retreat after a winter day outside, complete with a warm meal and crackling fire.

Cost is \$199.00. The fee includes, three classes with equipment, all meals and accommodations for the weekend. Some partial scholarships are available.




Little girl ice fishing.

Please inquire for more details by contacting Krista McLarty at (902) 424-8614 BOWNS@gov.ns.ca or Tara Crandlemere at (902) 485-7028.*

Tara Crandlemere is a Fisheries Technician with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Inland Fisheries Division in Pictou, NS.

(Photos courtesy of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)



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Nova Scotia Bats: Numbers, Behavior And Vulnerability

By Hugh Broders

Although often a maligned group of animals, bats are fascinating to those who spend the time to learn about their unique ecology and experience their mastery of the night. The 1,000 or so bat species worldwide encompasses a huge biological diversity. Body sizes range from the 2 g bumblebee bat of Thailand, the smallest known mammal in the world, to the 1.5 kg flying foxes with a wingspan of up to 5-6 feet. Diet of the various species include fruit, nectar, fish, frogs, rodents and blood, but most species, including all those in Nova Scotia feed on insects. Bats can live a long time. For example, to date the maximum recorded lifespan of the little brown bat, which weighs approximately as much as a toonie, is 34 years.



Shown here is *Lucifugus* perched on a finger.

Here in Nova Scotia, there have been seven species of bat recorded but probably only 3-4 of these have significant and regular summer populations. Herein I will attempt to provide some insight into what my students and I have learned about the numbers, distribution, behavior and vulnerability of these species in Nova Scotia over the last few years.

During the summer months bats replenish fat reserves depleted during hibernation, reproduce and prepare for the upcoming winter. Because of the inhospitable nature of our winters (cold with

no food) it is not possible for the bats of our region to remain active during this time. As a group, local bat species have 2 strategies to cope with these conditions: move to warmer climates as is done by many birds (i.e., migrate) or build up fat reserves and move to a suitable cave or mine and hibernate. Unlike the amount of information we have on bird migration, relatively little is known about migration for bat species that make the long flights. Several important cave and mine sites that are used as hibernacula have been identified in Nova Scotia, but we feel many such sites remain to be discovered. Important hibernacula may contain thousands of bats during the winter, and at this time they are very vulnerable to human disturbance. Destruction of the site could lead to instant mortality of all indi-

viduals. A more subtle and common form of disturbance is caused by people visiting hibernacula. Such visits may awaken bats causing them to use valuable fat reserves that they need to survive the winter and therefore increasing the probability that they will not survive until spring.

The species

The species that most everyone sees flying over the local waterways, around streetlights and maybe emerging from the attics of older buildings at dusk (and if you are up, entering at dawn) is most

likely to be the little brown bat. It is a generalist bat meaning that it feeds in a variety of habitats on many insect types. They roost (spend the day) in attics, under shingles, and many other human-created structures as well as in trees (under bark, in cavities, etc.). During the summer, female little brown bats form maternity colonies of up to 200-300 individuals in attics, tree cavities, etc. where they each give birth to, and care for their single pup. Males roost solitarily during the summer and do not seem to assist in the rearing of young. Starting around mid-August bats will begin to leave summering areas for hibernacula where they will mate and continue to put on fat reserves. Although mating occurs in the fall, sperm is stored over winter and the egg is not fertilized until the following spring. Most adults that we capture at the entrance to hibernacula are in good body condition. Juveniles however, are often very scrawny (skin on bones) and we often capture them when it is very cold and there are few, if any insects visible. Rarely were adults active during such times. It seems likely that these juveniles were attempting to make the best of a dire situation- they are “dammed if they do and dammed if they don’t”, so to speak. If they don’t hunt they probably won’t have enough fat reserves to make it until spring, but if they do hunt the likelihood of success is low and they are going to be using valuable energy in the process. I expect that over winter mortality of first year animals is really high.

Previously believed to be rare in Nova Scotia the northern long-eared bat numbers seem to rival those of the little brown bat. Although, to the untrained eye their appearance might seem similar to the little brown bat, ecologically it is very different. The northern long-eared bat is a forest dependent species that is adept at navigating through our “cluttered” forests in complete darkness. They hunt for flying moths, beetles and other insects but also glean their prey from vegetation. They seem to roost exclusively in trees. Like little brown bats, males are solitary and typically roost under loose bark, and females form maternity colonies of up to 80-100 individuals in tree cavities. Preliminary insights from ongoing research on a single large maternity colony at Dollar Lake Provincial Park with MSc candi-

Continued on page 14



First Annual Fundraising Banquet A Su

By Tony Rodgers

The Federation would like to thank the following companies and individuals for making our first banquet a huge success. Next year's date has already been picked - September 14, 2006. Watch for details.

We would like to thank the following:

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event on Sept. 15/05

For next year's ticket information call:
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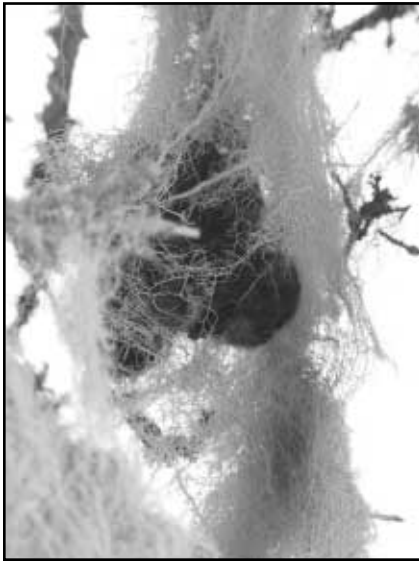
*Photos courtesy of W.J. Woods,
Lightsmith Photography.*



Nova Scotia Bats...

Continued from page 13.

date Colin Garroway suggests that a colony uses dozens of trees over the course of the summer, with tree characteristics used varying with time of year (which is related to varying weather conditions and reproductive status). This, combined with results from my previous research efforts, suggests that to maintain local populations of this species we require, generally, diverse forests with lots of trees of varying conditions (size, species, decay condition) with cavities.

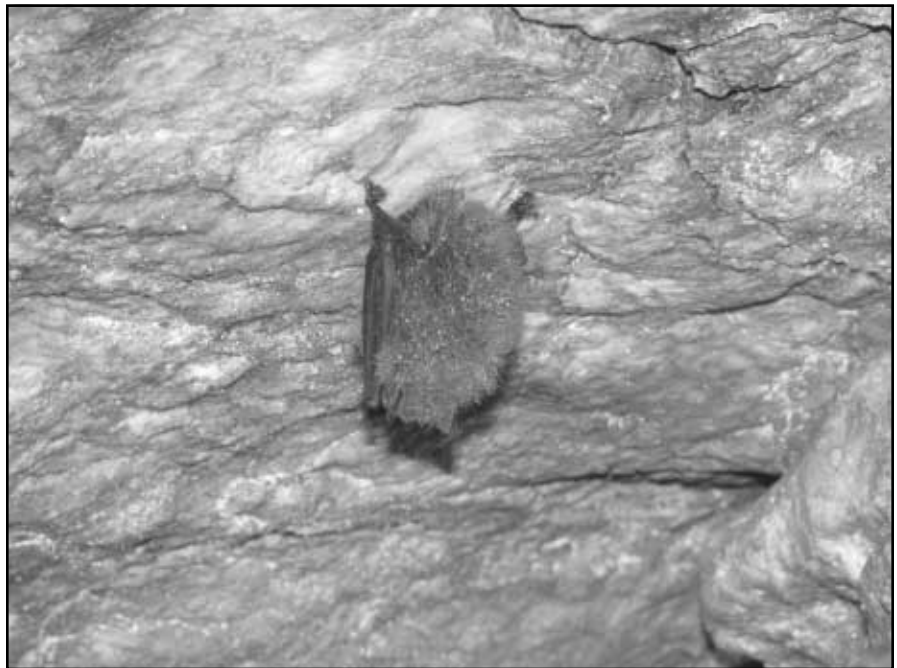


Pipistrelle in moss hanging from a tree.

In the summer of 2001 I documented a significant concentration of eastern pipistrelle bats in Kejimikujik National Park. Although this species had previously been recorded in the province this concentration came as a bit of a surprise. Since that time we have studied this population in greater detail. Generally, our research to date suggests that the local population is small (I predict fewer than 2000 females), geographically restricted and they appear different from other populations of the same species. MSc candidate Greg Quinn studied the ecology of the species in Kejimikujik National Park and discovered that in the park during the summer the population consists almost entirely of females and that females form maternity colonies of 3-15 individuals in old mans beard lichen. Former Honours student Lisa Rockwell and current MSc candidate Lesley Corning have determined that their provincial summer range is restricted to southwest Nova Scotia and Lesley is currently examining the factors that affect the provincial distribution of the species. Based on the

work to date I predict their abundance will be dependent upon the presence of mature low-lying softwood forests that are proximal to rivers and/or lakes. Although we predict that the species does hibernate in the region and we have recorded a few individuals at hibernacula it seems we have yet to identify a significant hibernacula for this species.

The only other bat species that may have a regular summer population in the province is the Hoary bat. The hoary bat is the largest of the bats that occur in Canada at around 30 g. It is a migratory species that we have recorded at a number of sites throughout the province. It appears that they are low in numbers and their occurrence is widespread. We are not yet able to determine if they have a resident population that returns to the province year after year, or if individuals that occur here are those that wander from the intended migration course and find themselves beyond the species normal range. If the latter is the case we would expect that there is year-to-year turnover in the local individuals and high between-year variability in local population size.



Above image shows Pipistrelle clinging to rock face. (photos courtesy of Hugh Broders)

The other species that have been recorded here in the province include the red bat, silver-haired bat and big brown bat. Our research suggests that these species do not have any regular or significant populations here in the province and previous records were likely from vagrants, beyond the normal range of their species.

Conclusions

Bats are an abundant and fascinating group of animals that appeals to nature enthusiasts worldwide. From a conservation perspective, population sizes of many species have experienced dramatic reductions in size due to human-created alterations in the ecosystem structure. Here in Nova Scotia there are at least 2 species, the northern long-eared bat and the eastern pipistrelle bat, that are dependent on mature, but different forest conditions. It is possible that we can use the relationship of certain bat species to mature forest conditions as an indicator or forest landscape 'health'. There are a myriad of other species that are also dependent upon similar forest conditions. Therefore, by gauging the presence and/or abundance of certain bat species we can determine how successful current management practices are for maintaining local biodiversity.

If you have any questions about bats a very reputable source of information is the Bat Conservation International website at www.batcon.org.

I am very thankful to those organi-

zations that support our research. My research program on bats here in Nova Scotia has been supported by the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund, Parks Canada, Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and Saint Mary's University.*

\$527 Million Wasted On Gun Registry Computer Contracts

“Will it take the Auditor General or a ‘Gomery’ to find out why it cost so much?”

Recently, Garry Breitkreuz, MP for Yorkton-Melville and Conservative Firearms Critic, released a 14-page document listing more than \$527 million in computer contracts issued by the Canada Firearms Centre since 1997. The 133 contracts and contract amendments were issued to five companies. “How can the gun registry computer systems possibly cost more than half a billion dollars?” asked Breitkreuz. “The size of these num-

bers never ceases to amaze me. After all, it cost only \$8 million to register 40 million cows and that registry actually works.”

The documents (see link below) obtained through an Access to Information Act request show the following:

- SHL & EDS Systemhouse: 13 contracts totaling \$ 39.2 Million
- EDS Canada Inc: 62 contracts totaling \$150.5 Million
- BDP Business Data Services: 20 contracts totaling \$17.4 Million
- CGI Information Systems: 29 contracts totaling \$ 2.0 Million

- TEAM CENTRA (CGI & BDP): 5 contracts totaling \$318.2 Million

“This isn’t all the computer contracts, but these are the biggest players in the gun registration scheme,” said Breitkreuz. “Major sub-contractors on the project include Bell, NexInnovations, Aliant and Compaq, but we don’t know the total value of their contracts yet.”

“This has the potential to be an even bigger scandal than Adscam. We hope the Auditor General will answer many of our fiscal questions when she tables the financial update of the firearms fiasco in February. Failing that, I’m afraid it’s going to take another public enquiry to get to the bottom of this mess,” concluded Breitkreuz.*

*Canada Firearms Centre 14-Page ATI Response – File: A-2005-0035
http://www.garrybreitkreuz.com/publications/2005_new/29.pdf*

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Study to Investigate Impact of Chronic Wasting Disease on Humans

Binghamton University, State University of New York

Researchers at Binghamton University have a first-ever opportunity to determine if Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer can be spread to humans who ingest "infected" meat.

Ralph M. Garruto, professor of biomedical anthropology at Binghamton University, State University of New York, is heading up a study to monitor the health implications of a group of people who are known to have consumed venison infected with CWD. Recently discovered in both wild and captive deer herds in New York, CWD is similar to mad cow disease in that it concentrates in the spinal cord and brain and is caused by a virtually indestructible mutated protein called a prion. "We don't know if CWD can be transmitted to humans," said Garruto. "So this group, some of whom we know for sure ate infected meat, offers us a unique opportunity. I'm hoping the study will allow us to determine if this disease can affect humans in the same way mad cow disease has been shown to cause neurological disease in those who consume infected beef."

The study focuses on a group of people who attended a Sportman's feast in Verona, NY, earlier this year. It is known that at least some of the attendees, all of whom were offered a variety of entree choices, consumed venison from a deer infected with CWD. Upon hearing of the dinner, Garruto approached the Oneida County Health Department (OCHD) to determine if they would assist in a scientific examination of the people who ate the meat.

"Although not everyone involved

was particularly concerned or fearful, it is important for us to protect the health of all county residents," said Ken Fanelli, OCHD representative. "Professor Garruto's study is a proactive response to determining what, if any, will be the long-term health effects, which is one of our most important responsibilities."

Over 50 individuals have already indicated their interest in being part of the study that will involve an initial interview and completion of a questionnaire to help assess risk, including the role played by individuals at the dinner, what they ate, their place of residence, occupation, medical history and other activities. The study will monitor the health of the participants over a period of six years. No invasive testing will be performed and identities will be kept strictly confidential.

"The people who take part in this project can be assured that every measure will be taken to ensure their privacy," said Garruto. "Their contribution is vital to the success of this 'first of its kind' research that may hold worldwide significance in the study of CWD and similar prion diseases."

CWD was first discovered in Colorado in 1967 and has since been documented in several Rocky Mountain and Midwest states. This year, New York State became the first state west of the Mississippi to report CWD in both privately owned and wild deer herds found in parts of Oneida County. Most recently in September, West Virginia reported its first cases of the disease. How the disease is spread from deer-to-deer and how it may impact the environment in which infected animals graze is unclear.

"We're looking at an issue that

could have multiple impacts," said Garruto. "Human health and keeping the food supply is of primary concern. But we also have to monitor how to keep this epidemic from spreading among deer and across species, from deer to cattle, both of which could have huge economic as well as health implications."

Garruto notes that although a prion disease appears to be transmitted through direct animal-to-animal contact and/or indirect exposure, including contaminated water, soil and brouse by saliva, urine and feces, it is still unclear as to how it's transmitted.

"CWD demands a lot more attention than it's been getting," says Garruto. "Too little research has been done so far to be sure humans can't contract the disease and we do not know if transmission from deer to cattle who share the same grazing land is possible. This is an important missing link as cow to human cross-species transmission does take place, evidenced by the mad cow and variant Creutzfeldt Jacob Disease epidemics in Europe. This study will give us some solid conclusions and allow us to determine how to manage the risks."

Binghamton University is one of the four university centers of the State University of New York. Known for the excellence of its students, faculty, staff and programs, Binghamton enrolls about 14,000 students in programs leading to bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees. Its curriculum, founded in the liberal arts, has expanded to include selected professional and graduate programs.*

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Man's Best Friend's Worst Enemy

Fall is here and the crisp air and changing colours mean that we want to spend even more quality time outdoors with our canine companions. However, this season also brings a risk for both dogs and their human families: leptospirosis.

What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a serious and potentially fatal bacterial disease which attacks a dog's liver and kidneys, causing irreversible damage and organ failure. Symptoms to watch for include fever, vomiting, lethargy, abdominal pain and increased urination.

In the past year, reported cases of leptospirosis have increased across Canada and the United States. Although treatment is possible, the disease is extremely difficult to detect. This means that by the time leptospirosis has been diagnosed, it may already be too late.

How is it spread?

There are several strains of the lep-

tospirosis bacteria. The disease is carried by wild animals such as raccoons and squirrels and is transmitted to dogs when they come into contact with the infected animal's fluids.

For example, urine found in bodies of still water, like puddles, can be ingested by a thirsty pup out for a walk or playing in his back yard. Your dog can also catch leptospirosis from contact with an infected dog, and it can be passed to people through urine and saliva. For this reason, it's important to encourage your pet to show affection without giving kisses near your mouth.

We live in the city. Is my dog safe?

City dogs are just as likely to contract leptospirosis as rural ones. Through urban development, wildlife in Canada has been displaced and, more than ever, tends to live in cities. Squirrels can be found in most of our favourite walking spots, from parks to side streets. Raccoons thrive in cities and boldly go through Fido's domain to get to

his food dish or a garbage can.

Rainfall helps create the ideal conditions for the leptospirosis bacteria to flourish. Recent flooding in the Prairies and Maritimes and heavy rainfalls in Quebec means that these regions are particularly vulnerable to leptospirosis.

What should I do to protect my pooch?

Talk to your veterinarian about vaccination which is the best way to prevent this serious disease. Ask for a vaccine such as LeptoVax 4, which offers the broadest protection against the different strains of leptospirosis bacteria.

Also, be sure to keep your dog on a leash when going for walks to prevent it from contacting wild animals or unvaccinated dogs. Consider bringing water from home with you on your walks, to make sure your pet is drinking safely.*

- News Canada

New Logo for NSFAH

By Tony Rodgers

As readers of Nova Outdoors, you have undoubtedly noticed that the Federation's logo has been changed and is now featured in all areas of the magazine.

Our old logo was actually shared with one of our member clubs, The Halifax Wildlife Association. They are the registered owners of that logo and a number of years ago asked the Federation if we would find another logo so that they could use it exclusively.


The Federation began a quest for a new logo and after some deliberation and searching we settled on a design by Graham Whiteman of Dartmouth.



The Osprey is Nova Scotia's official bird and is now our official logo. It is both a hunter and an angler and will be displayed on all Federation letterhead, envelopes, hats and banners.



We wish to thank everyone that submitted suggestions for the new emblem and congratulate the NSFAH Board of Directors on its selection.



Nova Scotia Federation of
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Fast-growing tree plantations in Canada

By Don Cameron

*"The secret to life is to live it."
(Unknown)*

Canadians have been planting trees for as long as people have lived here. It is not a new concept. Reports of organized tree planting on the Prairies date back to the 1830s, and Canada has been involved in research on tree improvement since the early 1950s. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, provinces and industries started investing in ways to grow trees more quickly, from a smaller land base, and closer to wood-processing centres due to an energy crisis that drove up transportation and production costs.

This research has continued since the energy crisis, encouraged by various issues such as using wood as an alternate form of fuel, fast-growing wood for the forest industry, and carbon sequestration. Until this time, however, large-scale industrial use of fast-growing trees has not been undertaken.

Worldwide, other forest nations are continually increasing their fast-growing plantation area. Canada has been assessing its current situation to determine whether it should follow the same trend.

Producing fast growing tree species

Because of Canada's cold winters and short summers, only a few tree species have been bred for fast growth and high-

volume yield. The most commonly used species is hybrid poplar, a mix of native and non-native poplar species. The specific qualities of the site to be planted would determine which tree species is most appropriate.

Current average hybrid poplar growth rates in Canada varies from 9 to 25 cubic metres per hectare per year, depending on the site and the trees used. On better sites, tree growth is reported to vary from 15 to 35 cubic metres per hectare per year, much higher than the current average yield in Canadian forests of about 1.7 cubic metres per hectare per year. Yields vary widely across the country due to factors such as soil quality, climate, damaging agents such as insects, disease, forest fires and the intensity of management.

Fast-growing tree plantations in Canada

Small-scale plantings of hybrid poplar are found in southern Quebec, eastern Ontario, southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, southern British Columbia, and on Vancouver Island. Other species have been planted in these and other areas of the country.

For example, here in Nova Scotia between 1970 and 1995, there were millions of Norway Spruce seedlings planted across the province. Research had shown that this imported species could outperform our native spruce species by a large

margin in most growing conditions.

However, experience has shown us that there are risks and possible downsides involved with planting exotic species like Norway spruce, including: over-sensitivity to frost, suffers significant damage from a girdling insect - the white pine weevil, often seems to be the preferred food for browsing deer and hare, doesn't grow well under shade, and they don't produce viable seed for nearly 50 years. As well, its structural strength has been called into question due to its rapid growth.

Other non-native species that have been planted in the province include: Japanese larch, exotic pines, highland white spruce, and jack pine to varying degrees of success. There has been very little planting of fast growing hardwood species in Nova Scotia to date. We can grow our native hardwood trees fast, the problem is that from a forest products standpoint, the wood quality is generally only fair. In the future, there will surely be more recognition of the potential value of increased hardwood management.

Don Cameron is a Registered Professional Forester.

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Our Response

By Tony Rodgers

The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters (NSFAH) is pleased to salute the efforts of the Nova Scotia Minister of Natural Resources, Richard Hurlburt and his enforcement staff for cracking down on the poaching of mainland moose, which is an endangered species.

“Operation Crossroad” has been a huge success for the department, with the laying of eight charges related to illegal hunting activities. They will appear in

court in December.

“After last year’s success in nailing and convicting moose poachers in Cumberland County, one would have thought that poachers would think twice about doing it anywhere else in the province. But that is not the case and we hope that courts in Antigonish County view these charges with the same disgust. The courts have the ability to cripple these accused poachers from doing any further damage to an already delicate situation with fines under the Endangered Species Act,” said Tony Rodgers, executive direc-

tor of the NSFAH.

It is hard enough for wildlife biologists to help recover the moose herd on the mainland without wildlife thieves stealing that opportunity from nature. The operation was appropriately named by a lead officer on the case because the mainland moose are at a crossroad in their recovery.

Our congratulations to Minister Hurlburt, John Mombourquette, enforcement director and the 12 officers who were successful in this operation to protect a valuable resource. *

Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund

Government of Nova Scotia Natural Resources

Applications for 2006 will be accepted from December 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006.

The Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund was established under the Nova Scotia Wildlife Act to assist the funding of programs for the protection and enhancement of wildlife and wildlife habitats. The Fund is organized under four objectives: Enhancement, Acquisition, Research, and Education.

Each objective has a set of Priority Activities. The Habitat Conservation Fund will partner in projects on a cost shared basis not to exceed 75 percent of total project cost.

Applicants must consult the Conditions for Awarding Grants and Proposal Submission Guidelines and Application before submitting an application. These documents, and any additional information that may be required, are also available from any office of the Department of Natural Resources or from the following:

Natural Resources
Wildlife Division
136 Exhibition Street
Kentville, Nova Scotia
B4N 4E5
Phone: (902) 679-6091
Fax: (902) 679-6176

To be considered, the application must include all information and materials in the manner specified in the Important Steps in Submitting a Proposal and in the Proposal Submission Guidelines and Application.

The Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund reserves the right not to recommend an award if, in the opinion of the Board, no suitable proposal is received. Normally, proposals are not funded for more than \$25,000. The submission date for applications is December 1 through to January 31.*

The Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund looks forward to receiving your submission. In partnership, we can conserve wildlife habitat across Nova Scotia.



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Lyme Disease

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted from infected deer ticks (blacklegged ticks) to humans. The ticks which spread Lyme disease are smaller than the more common wood ticks and unlike wood ticks, do not have white markings on their bodies. In the wild, adult deer ticks are usually found on deer, but may be carried on domestic animals such as dogs, cats and horses. Tick bites are usually painless and most people do not know that they have been bitten. Lyme disease has become a common problem in parts of the United States and has been reported in certain parts of Canada.

How is Lyme Disease Transmitted?

The disease is caused by a tiny spiral-shaped bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Infection of humans usually occurs after a bite by an infected arthropod. In most cases, the arthropod is a tick. Under laboratory conditions, horseflies, deer-flies and mosquitoes also may carry the bacteria, but their role in transmitting Lyme disease in the wild is currently unknown.

The tick drops off most mammals, attaches to grasses and shrubs and transfers to animals and humans that brush past the vegetation. The tick only transmits the disease after it has attached to the human for at least 24 hours, at which point it is at least partly engorged. An infected tick must have its mouth parts buried in your skin for at least 18 to 24 hours. Thus, daily checks and removal of ticks should virtually eliminate any risk of transmission in Nova Scotia.

What to Look For

In many cases, Lyme disease is recognized as a red rash starting at the tick bite and spreading out, often as a growing circle. This rash can start 3 to 30 days after the bite. (A swollen red area that appears immediately after the tick bites is likely a reaction to the tick and is NOT Lyme disease.) The rash may be accompanied by fever, chills, headache, fatigue and swollen lymph glands. In some cases, Lyme disease results in neurological and muscular problems weeks or months af-

ter the original infection. More serious ailments such as recurrent meningitis, heart problems, and arthritis may be present for years.

Can Lyme disease Be Treated?

YES, particularly in the early stages. *Borrelia* bacteria can be killed with antibiotics. Antibiotics are also effective in resolving the arthritis and muscular problems seen later in some infections.

Who Is At Greatest Risk?

People who are active outdoors are most likely to contact ticks and other arthropods. This includes children, anglers, hikers, canoeists, farmers, tourists and persons involved in forestry and wildlife occupations (such as loggers, trappers, and biologists). Anyone who spends time in tall grass, brush or forested areas should shower and/or make a thorough daily check of your body (particularly head, neck and groin regions) for ticks or later, the characteristic red rash.

People who travel to areas of the United States with epidemic Lyme disease are at greater risk than those who stay in Nova Scotia. In addition, people who are active with hunting dogs in areas of good tick habitat may be at risk, as are their dogs.

How Can I Avoid Lyme Disease?

Here are some precautions you can take without limiting your time outdoors.

- Keep the grass around your house cut.
- When you are outside during tick season, avoid sitting on, lying on or travelling through tick habitats. Avoid sitting directly on the ground, and stay in the centre of paths.
- Wear light coloured clothing to make it easier to see ticks that may be on you.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks to thwart a tick's effort to crawl onto your skin.
- Always wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt if you are in tall grass or wooded areas.
- Spray repellents containing DEET onto your clothing and exposed skin (other

than the face). Use with caution on small children.

- Inspect yourself, your children and your pets for ticks as soon as you leave an area that may have ticks.

What If I Find A Tick Embedded In My Skin?

First, do not squash it. Squeezing an infected tick may force bacteria out of the mouth parts and into the tick bite (and you). The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it gently with tweezers as close to its mouth as possible (the part sticking into your skin) Slowly pull the tick straight out - do not jerk or twist it. Note the rumoured remedies like matches, cigarettes, or vaseline DO NOT WORK and may cause an infected tick to pump bacteria into the wound. Check the tick bite area for at least two weeks. If a red rash appears, take the tick (if possible) and go to a doctor.

You can help in the study of Lyme disease:

To help us learn more about Lyme disease and ticks in Nova Scotia, we would appreciate if you could send us the tick for identification. The deer tick is smaller than the wood tick and does not have any white markings on the large part of its body. Ticks matching this description can either be hand-delivered (preferred) or mailed to your nearest office of the Department of Natural Resources, or to the Museum of Natural History.

Place the tick in a clean, sturdy pill bottle or film canister and add a small amount of alcohol. Firmly tape the lid shut. Include with the package your name, telephone number and information as to where, when and on whom (e.g. dog, person) the tick was found.*

Printed courtesy of The Nova Scotia Department of Health. See: www.gov.ns.ca/health/publichealth/content/pubs/lymedisease.pdf.

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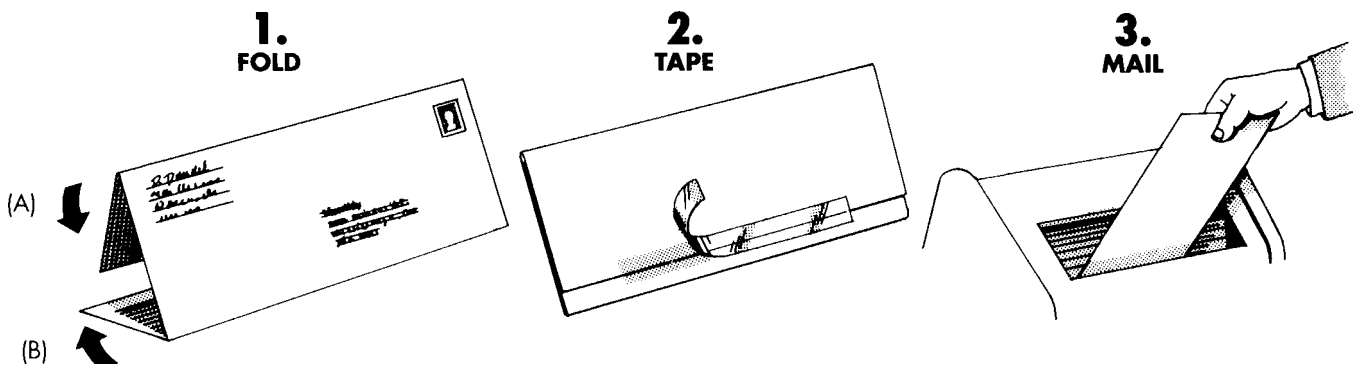


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