

The Sand Lance (*Ammodytes*) constitutes a major prey for at least 40 species of birds, 12 species of marine mammals, 45 species of fishes and a number of invertebrates. Variations in their populations can have a major effect the breeding success of the species that use it as a primary food. [Adapted from Pacific Northwest Research Station Res. Pap. PNW-RP-521, 1999]



Those interested in birding in other areas and willing to show their favorite spots to visiting birders at no charge may be interested in birdingpal.com a site established on world wide web in April, 2000 by Knud Rasmussen. (adapted from information E-mailed by M. Johnston on May 25)

If you are bothered by pigeons at a feeder on a balcony or porch, you might try planting lots of marigolds as a deterrent. In addition to their blooms and colour, these plants support a number of butterflies. [Adapted from TFN:492 article by Lorna Houston]

Dutch studies published in 1994 and 1995 found fewer birds in areas where average sound levels were 55 to 58 decibels (downtown Toronto runs at 60 to 72 decibels). They theorized that noise interfered with the ability of young male birds to learn the precise songs required to attract females of the species. [adapted from TFN 489:27 extracted from a May 8th, 1999 Toronto Star article by Cameron Smith]

RATING THE TEACHERS - INAUGURAL NHS BIRD COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Twenty-six of the participants in the Natural History Society's Bird Identification Course provided their feelings about this course so that the Society can decide whether it should be offered in the future and, if so, how it could improve future offerings of this and other courses. Participants rated the overall content, the parts they liked the best, those they liked the least, and other facets. Their evaluations were as follows:

With regards to usefulness, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest, 72% scored it 4 or 5, 24% as 3 and 4% as 2. There comments were: good; very informative; too much info in too short a time; terrific; it gave me a more visual idea of what they look like; very useful to learning new birds; very good review; I still have a lot to learn; I am a novice but I find it very helpful - sometimes overwhelming. Really enjoyed opportunities to go on field trips and know what the Society was doing; quite useful; I found it very useful in showing details that I might not notice on my own; an overview - but difficult to retain the info, not enough stress on any one topic on birds; excellent introduction and confirmation course on my limited skills; I really enjoyed the course. It was an update for me having taken a course about 10 years ago; I try to identify the difficult birds now; repetitive presentation helpful; and more aware of field marks that stand out on some birds.

The best liked parts were described as follows [note - numbers in brackets reflect number of individuals who made a particular comment]: slides (10); slides and description tips; the pictures and information given; everything; the parts that concentrated on bird songs and waterfowl; slides and commentaries; questions and answers; hawks & owls; sometimes the commentary was more interesting than the slides - also questions from participants generated some very useful comments and information; liked them all; I really like to hear about behaviour and habitat - helps me to remember the species better; slides very interesting; when you showed pictures of birds because I wanted to be able to identify birds; the relaxed repartee of the two presenters; pictures and story behind the bird; it make myself more aware of the birds example I now started feeding birds; knowledgeable teachers; the introduction re beaks and feeding, presentation of the raptors; field trip - enjoyed guest speakers especially Bob Bancroft;

The least liked parts were: none or variants of this comment (12), it was hard to remember the information, especially when we get out in the field; course could be longer 1 ½ to 2 hours, more information on areas to watch birds; need more interaction, comments & such from the audience. More time allowed for questions and answers; I don't like seeing the female birds or the slides of birds not found on P.E.I.; slides that are ambiguous; some evenings the number of slides were overwhelming (to the novice anyway) - difficult to hear the names of the birds