

WEATHER:

Tracadie Harbour was 95% iced over on Mar. 18 (JDM). It was a very late spring with heavy snowfalls being normal events right through until April 7th. There were large snow accumulations with most fields being covered by 2 or more feet and woodlands supporting 4 feet or more. In most areas under the snow, the ground was unfrozen and the snow was slowly being absorbed. Good thawing started the week of April 9th and rivers just east of Charlottetown were in flood the week of April 20th to 27th. Ice was very late leaving the Hillsborough with only parts of the channel between the bridge and the Hospital open in the first week of April (JDM). F&JC reported that the run was open between the Stanhope Hotel and Covehead in late April.

The heavy snows of winter led to a late planting start for farmers and foresters as many back roads were blocked by snow into early May and fields and woods were very wet. By July, conditions had changed abruptly and the heavy precipitation of last winter was a distant shadow as dry conditions went on week after week. By early August, forest fire codes were becoming dangerously high and farmers were noting the impact of the drought. These dry conditions continued into mid August with weather observers noting the driest summer since the 1960s.

ANIMAL AND PLANT SIGHTINGS:

Compiled by J. Dan McAskill

Note: This Newsletter contains sightings up to April 30th, 2001

INSECTS: HI reported a woolly bear caterpillar crossing his driveway on Mar. 16. NG seen about 100 hairy brown caterpillars on Apr. 25 at French Village. Big black ants came rushing out of a mound that was disturbed just as it appeared from the snow at French Village on Apr. 25 (HG). JP - reported a mosquito at Donagh on Apr. 23. JDM reported the first mosquitos seen this year at Foxley River on Apr. 26.

AMPHIBIANS: The late snow melt seems to have slowed the commencement of singing by frogs and toads. As of April 27th, there were no reports of singing by frogs and toads and only 1 American toad was reported (Apr. 27 in heavy rain at Emyvale). Sally Hooff reported that there were no peepers in the pond at her place in Malpeque.

MAMMALS: A bobcat with three kitten embryos in its uterus was shot in western PEI this winter (GMacD). A striped skunk was wandering on the Donagh Road during a brief thaw period in Feb. (JDM). Two were dead on the road on Mar. 20 between Donagh and Charlottetown. Red squirrels were seen in a mating chase in larch woods in Donagh on Mar. 4 (JDM). Red squirrels eating buds of white spruce trees in mid-April in Donagh (JDM). Chipmunk at Argyle Shore feeder on Mar. 16 & at Crossroads feeder on Mar. 19 (DO). Chipmunks came out for sunflowers on Apr. 21 in Donagh (JDM). Flying squirrel at Crossroads feeder on Mar. 21 (DO). Raccoon digging in marsh vegetation in early afternoon on Mar. 18 (JDM, RPh). In July, a female fox at Savage Harbour was seen attempting to contend with the needs of 7 pups.

BIRDS: Great Cormorant - present at East Point on Apr. 8 (DSe); **Double-crested Cormorant** - 1 at Crossroads feeder on Apr. 10 (DO); **Great Blue Heron** - 1 at Cumberland on Jan. 2 (EMA), 2 at Stanhope on Apr. 6 (WFB, EM), 2 at Fullerton's Marsh and 2 at Ellen's Creek on evening of Apr. 6 (JDM), 2 at Ellen's Creek on Apr. 7 (SC), 1 flying at Mount Stewart on Apr. 21 (HG); **Brant** - 11 at Brackley Beach on Apr. 23 (DO), 25 at Tryon River on Apr. 29 (BMcO); **Canada Geese** - 11 at Ellen's Creek on Jan. 9, 8 on Jan. 10, 15 on Jan. 14, 4 on Jan. 17, 4 on Jan. 20 & 21 (JB), 8 at Souris River on Jan. 29 (JDM), LY reported hundreds arriving from south on Mar. 11 at Argyle Shore, 20 at Victoria on Mar. 11 (RA), RP heard geese in Donagh on Mar. 13, 20 at Ellen's Creek on Mar. 15 (JDM), 20 heading west at Cornwall on Mar. 15 (F&JC), 250 on ice at West River causeway on Mar. 18 & 46 on ice at Ellen's Creek on Mar. 18 (SC), 20 on side of ice beside road bridge at Midgell River on Mar. 19 (JDM), 5,000 at Dunk River on Mar. 28 (BH), 45 at Ellen's Creek on Jan. 9 (JB), on Apr. 2 at least 1,000 feeding on potatoes spread under diversion program at in Bedeque (JDM); **Barnacle Goose** - report of 1 with flock of Canada Geese in