

COUNTING BIRDS FOR NATURAL AREAS CONSERVATION:

By Dan
McAskill

For the past 9 years, a team of birders from the Natural History Society and the Island Nature Trust have pooled their efforts to raise funds for the Trust's land conservation programs. The idea was simple, one or more teams of birders collect financial pledges, either for a set amount, or an amount per species. The Natural History Society identifies a lead team for the Trust. The Trust's staff and the team members each seek pledges for the bird count. As well, the Trust seeks out individuals willing to collect pledges or to create additional teams of birders to collect pledges. Starting in 2004, each team member now volunteers to collect at least \$50 in pledges.

This fund raising program was started in 1995 and it was originally called the Autumn Birding Classic. As a tribute to the conservation achievements of Neil Bennett, shortly after Neil's death in February, 2000, the event was renamed the Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic. Since its inception, thanks to the generosity of the donors, \$9,460 has been donated for natural areas conservation. On this 10th anniversary, we hope that our readers will send in a pledge to the Trust. Tax receipts for donations are provided upon request and payments can be made by cash, cheque, or credit card. To make a donation or obtain the pledge forms for a new team, please contact the Trust at 902-892-7513 or via E-mail at intrust@isn.net Donation cheques can be mailed directly to the Island Nature Trust, P.O. Box 265, Charlottetown, PE C1A 7K4.

ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR:

Note: All Society presentations and field trips are open to the public.

Society meetings start at 7:30 PM at the Farm Centre on University Avenue in Charlottetown.

YN = young naturalists encouraged to attend or participate

- Sept. 25 - The Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic bird count.** To participate see the enclosed article or to send a tax deductible donation contact the Island Nature Trust at 892-7513. All donations go towards conservation on natural areas on Prince Edward Island.
- Oct. 4 - Mammalian Fauna of PEI,** presented by Dr. Doug Sobey, a native Islander, ecologist, and a recently retired professor from the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. Dr. Sobey will present his findings on the historic records of PEI mammals. The Society's meeting starts at 7:30 pm at the Farm Centre, University Ave., Charlottetown. **YN**
- Oct. 9 - THE BIG SIT!** – Birding's Most Sedentary event. The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island and the City of Summerside co-sponsor the first PEI Big Sit at Green Shore (west end of Water Street boardwalk) in Summerside. THE BIG SIT! is like a Big Day, or a bird-a-thon in that the object is to tally as many bird species as can be seen or heard within 24 hours. The difference lies in the area limitation (inside a 17-foot circle) from which you can observe. What a great way to bird! This fun event is free-of-charge to everyone - you can register for an hour or the day depending of the time you have available. Check out the "Bird Watcher's Digest" for details at <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com> Contact PEI organizer, Ron Arvidson at 658-2566, or by email arvidson@pei.sympatico.ca for more information and to register.
- Oct. 19 - Finding Autumn Mushrooms Along Scenic Heritage Roads** with Jackie Waddell and Katherine Clough (tentative). Part of the Nature Series of talks at Confederation Centre Library starting at 7:00 pm
- Oct. 23 - Tracking Fall Migrants** -- The Natural History Society's Dwaine Oakley to conduct birding tour of Earncliffe and Dromore area for starters. Car pooling from Farm Centre at 7:30 am. **YN**
- Nov. 1 - Starry, Starry Night – the mysteries of the fall and winter skies.** Glen Roberts is a member of the Astronomy Society and does a monthly presentation on CBC's Main Street program and a column in the Guardian on astronomy. This Natural History Society's meeting starts at 7:30 pm at the Farm Centre, University Ave., Charlottetown. **YN**
- Nov. 16 - Feeding Wild Birds in Winter.** Jackie Waddell will narrate slides and have plenty of examples of seeds and other bird foods and feeders to get you started in your backyard. Part of the Nature Series of