

and "sea-mice" from their high-pitched calls.

It would be hard to prove the precise extent to which hunting has contributed to the near-disappearance of these birds from our shores. However, it is worth noting that in Iceland a similar steady decline continued until the 1960's, when the taking of Harlequin Ducks was outlawed. Since then, the population has shown promising signs of an excellent recovery.

When a particular wildlife population falls below a certain level, it no longer matters what the primary cause of the decline may have been. Any further stress may be enough to push the remaining number out of existence. Waterfowl biologists suspect that the eastern Canadian population of the Harlequin Duck may be close to this critical point.

In an attempt to reverse the trend, the Canadian Wildlife Service recently clamped down on the shooting of Harlequins, and published an attractive information brochure, "The Harlequin Duck: Help Protect It", to inform sportsmen about the need for strict conservation measures. Still, regulations themselves are only symbolic; compliance will be the key. Given wise management and the support of hunters, it is not too late to predict with confidence that the elegant little "lords and ladies" will continue to grace the shores of Atlantic Canada.

New President and new editor

As some of you may have heard, the Natural History Society has undergone a few changes over the summer. Not without a lot of thought, Susan Stephenson has stepped down as President of the Society, although she has accepted the position of Vice-President. Trying to combine a more-than full-time job with the amount of work demanded of the President (not to mention time for oneself) is next to impossible to manage. Susan put a lot of work into the Society during her terms as President, and we all owe her a large debt of thanks.

Fortunately, Vice-President Patrick Wootton has agreed to take over as President and the extra workload that involves. Let's all try to pitch in and make this Society active and try to share a little more in the work that's involved. We all have skills that could help make the NHS run more smoothly - volunteer to lead a field trip, write an article, make something for the monthly meeting snacks. Everything helps!

And this will be the last newsletter for which I will serve as editor. It's hard to believe that I've been doing this since 1984 - time continues to fly, and it has brought a lot of joy into my life. But I am finding less and less time to do it, and I will be doing a newsletter for the Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island (the first one should be out soon). I hope this move will allow me to do more writing for the Island Naturalist, something I haven't had much time to do in the last year. The search is now on for a new editor, and I'm sure we'll find someone to breathe new life into the newsletter. Again, we can all help make that person's life much easier by sending in sightings, stories, artwork, folding newsletters, etc. You can keep sending copy, etc. to me at my address on page 2, and I will make sure they get passed on to the right person. The next newsletter will have a new address to send things to. Thanks to all those who have made the effort to contribute to the Island Naturalist in the past, and please continue to do so. And perhaps someone reading this would like to volunteer to be the new editor.