

BIRDS OF A FEATHER . . .

by Dan McAskill, Donagh



## 1983 CNF CONFERENCE

---



For those of you who were fortunate enough to attend the CNF Conference in Sackville in August, this phrase will bring back special memories of new friends found. The Organizing Committee issued name plates with various birds colored on them and then, during dinner, the birds of a feather flocked together. The idea worked very well and the various tables had people from locations scattered from western Canada to St. Pierre to the United States.

A report that would do credit to the sessions in the brief space allocated would be impossible, but I will attempt to provide you with an overview of the presentations which I found particularly enjoyable. The opening series of presentations on estuaries was very well integrated and started with Dr. Bob Stephenson describing the simple food webs of estuaries. Dr. Donald Gordon then described the Fundy Tidal Projects and their probable environmental impacts on intertidal sedimentation, the shad fishery, and water levels in the Gulf of Maine. The impact that tidal power in this area could have was driven home by Peter Hicklin's presentation on the feeding behaviour and concentrations of shore birds (especially the semi-palmated plover) in the Bay of Fundy, and by Dr. Michael Dadswell's presentation on the critical role of the upper bay in the shad and sturgeon feeding behaviour.

The Annual Meeting saw the election by acclamation of the nominees for the directors. CNF's stance on bilingualism was discussed and some moves toward improvement were made. CNF will work in close liason with a Quebec federation of 25 groups which has received federal funding for publication of a French language magazine similar to Nature Canada. The number of French offerings in the CNF bookstore will be increased, and the first presentation of a resolution in French was given.

The major resolutions passed at the meeting promoted:

- a) the establishment of a conservation management area in the Yukon Territory;
- b) the identification and census of Piping Plover nesting areas and the development and implementation of protection programs for them;
- c) the implementation of management plan development work and the protection of ecological reserves in New Brunswick;
- d) the establishment of an active environmental education program in New Brunswick schools.

For a complete review of the resolutions refer to the next Nature Canada.

This first day of the conference, although rainy, came to a close with clearing skies, a lobster and steak supper, a field trip on which 10 short-eared owls were seen, and then a lively square dance. For those with real stamina, Bert Crossman led a sing-song 'til the wee hours of the morning.

On the second day, I found the presentations to be especially captivating: Tony Lock on coastal seabird population trends, Martin Thomas on the Saint John River, Bruce Smith on mussel farming, Scott Kraus on the Right Whale in the Gulf of Maine, Ian McLaren on vagrant birds in Nova Scotia, and Freeman Patterson on nature photography. A steaming platter of cultured mussels enticed the seafood lovers on the afternoon break, thanks to Bruce.

The formal presentations of this conference came to a fitting conclusion with Freeman Patterson's exquisite slide show, "Namaqualand, Garden of the Gods".

The New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists is to be congratulated for organizing such an excellent conference. We all look forward eagerly to the next CNF gathering in British Columbia in July, 1984.