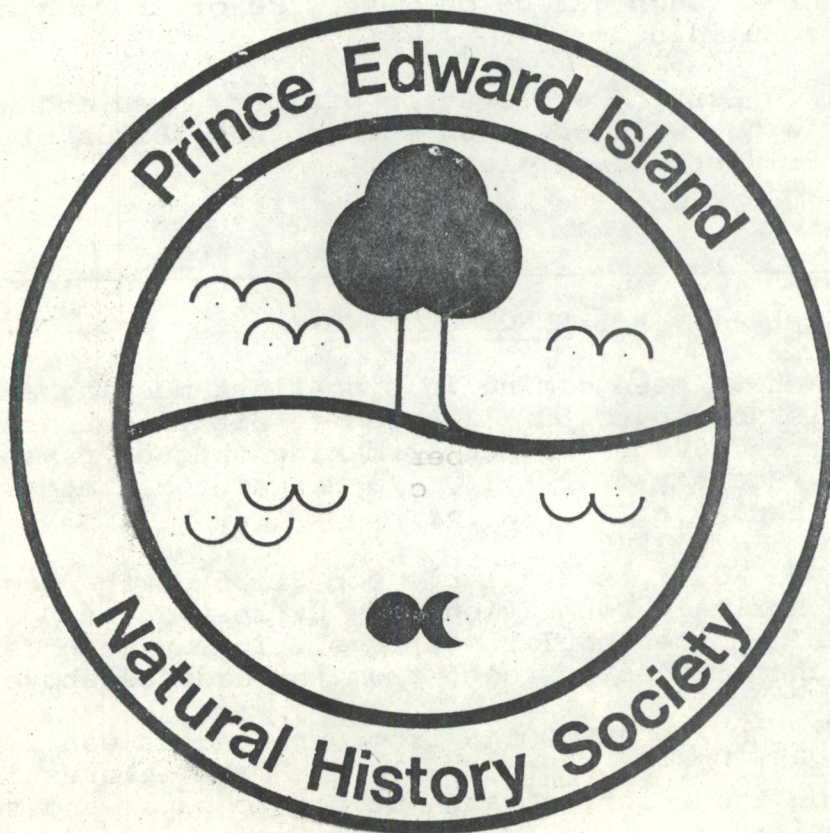


OUR NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY SYMBOL

During our April meeting last year it was decided to run a contest to choose a symbol for the Society. From entries submitted by school children and members a sketch by Clare Martin was selected. We are most grateful to Anne Patterson of Design Associates for the artwork on the finished product.

The symbol illustrates three major environmental components---sky, land and water. Three birds are depicted during flight in the upper part of the sketch while the centre is dominated by an oak tree, once a dominant tree in the province. In the water, a fish swims below the waves which may also be interpreted as reflections of the birds.



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THE PIPING PLOVER

One of the earliest of the summer visitors which flock to Atlantic Province beaches each year is the Piping Plover. So keen is it to get back that it barely waits for the snow and ice to leave the coast before it can be seen along our outer shores. The first birds arrive by mid April and soon begin the serious business of courting and establishing nesting territories. The males choose an appropriate expanse of flat dry sand which they spend much time patrolling. While running about in this area, they sometimes pause to nestle down onto the sand, vigorously wallowing to form a hollowed scrape in the sand.

The males also spend long intervals simply standing on some vantage point within their territory, perhaps choosing a small sand drift or an old log for this purpose. If another male enters the territory, it is immediately chased, the resident bird either chasing it in flight or approaching the intruder at a running charge with head down and feather ruffled. Sometimes the birds meet along a common boundary. In this case the two frequently commence strutting up and down the line, often stopping to face each other and bob their heads several times. Strutting birds assume very erect postures, maximizing the visual effect of their shiny white breasts and bellies and black neck ring.

It is from these territories that male Piping Plovers take off on their display flights. With deep slow wingbeats that show a flashing white from a distance, they fly over their territories in broad sweeping circles, uttering either a rapid series of high notes or a slower plaintive series of calls. After a female has been successfully courted, and the pair has mated, a clutch of four eggs is laid in a scrape