

# Guess who's coming for dinner

BY ANN DUTTON

Most of us who enjoy watching the antics of daily visitors to our bird feeders are secretly hoping to entice the rare and unusual into our gardens. The chance of this happening is much greater if we extend our feeding beyond the winter months into what the tourist-operators like to call the "Shoulder Seasons", or even all through the year.

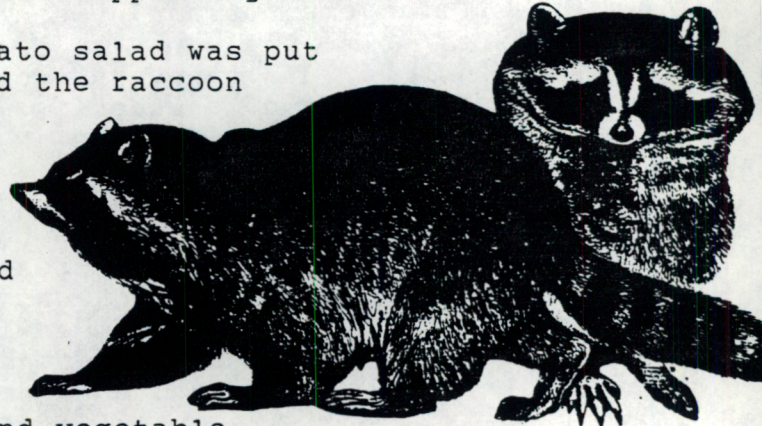
Some friends who live in the south-eastern area of the Island, in Murray Harbour North, operate their feeder year-round. Early last July their interest was aroused one evening when their cat suddenly became alert and wary and rushed through the house to jump up and stare through the window nearest the bird feeder. My friends looked out and saw a raccoon eating the sunflower seeds the birds had spilled on the grass. It ate all it could find before disappearing into the trees.

The next day, some left-over potato salad was put outside and as dusk approached, so did the raccoon who soon consumed this exotic supper. Hoping it would become a regular visitor, my friends next placed a dish of sunflower seeds on the ground under the feeder. That evening they waited expectantly, but could hardly believe their eyes when the adult raccoon appeared, leading five babies straight to the food!

After that the family came every evening. In addition to seeds and vegetable scraps they consumed large quantities of Purina Dog Chow. The mother left them in August, but the babies continued to visit daily and soon grew from about eight inches in length into healthy-looking adults.

My friends said that the raccoons would even go to the kitchen window to eat from their hands! They had a bad scare one evening when a dog belonging to visitors chased them into the woods. But they were back within a day or two unharmed. The raccoons took Hallowe'en in their stride - disappearing into the bushes as each carload of Trick-or-Treaters entered the driveway, and returning to their supper as it left.

They continued to visit regularly until mid-November, when presumably they went into hibernation. Now everyone is wondering how many will mate and bring their broods to dine next summer!



## Wildlife and woodlots

BY BOB BANCROFT

Lakes and streams throughout Nova Scotia offer opportunities for a wide variety of animals, from moose to salamanders. Forested lands bordering these areas provide some of the best habitat or living areas for our wildlife species. This article takes a fresh look at forestry practices on lands near waterways.

Buffer strips along waterways should be considered Special Management Zones (SMZ) where shelterwood, strip and patch cutting and other alternatives to large-scale clearcutting can be employed. This approach would maintain fish and wildlife habitats while still offering forestry