

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 1.

March, 1974

There is a good deal of discussion today about the "Quality of Life". People are realizing that a high material standard of living does not assure happiness. Naturalists are especially fortunate in knowing how much an interest in and an appreciation of the natural world can enrich human life. Nature hobbies can be enjoyed by people of all ages, at very little expense, and the pleasure increases each year as understanding grows. We can, and should, help our bored and unaware acquaintances by sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm with them.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, April 2, 1974
Time: 8:00 pm. Please be prompt!
Place: Prov. Health Bldg., 3rd floor
Speaker: Diane Griffin, Provincial Naturalist, Dept. of Environment and Tourism

Diane obtained her Masters degree in botany from Acadia University, N.S., and is very knowledgeable about the Island's flora. She will give us an illustrated talk on various wildflowers on P. E. I.. She will also spend some time discussing the incorporation of old Island roads into provincial parks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monthly meetings are announced on CFCY Radio Bulletin Board at 11.30 am. Listen for our notice on the Friday and Monday before the first Tuesday of the month.

There is to be a nature slide competition for all members. Slides are to be taken on Prince Edward Island during any season. Entries should be submitted at the November, 1974 meeting. The slides will be shown and winners announced at the December meeting.

Each member is asked to think of an idea for a symbol for our society and make a sketch of it. The idea is what counts, not perfection of execution!

Like to go on a hike ? explore some of P. E. I. 's secluded spots ? A small cohort goes out almost every Sunday. Those interested in joining the hikes should phone Margaret Mallett at 894-9595. Next month's newsletter will publish a schedule of hikes for the summer months.

LIFE UNDER THE SNOW

Spring has arrived! Recurring cold snaps encourage us to cast a backward glance at winter and ponder on the activities of those animals which hang around P. E. I. all winter. One group of mammals copes with the low temperatures, high winds and deep snow by living underneath the snow where conditions are relatively constant. The group to which we are referring are the microtine mammals, which most people would simply call "mice". They develop a system of burrows or runs along the 1" to 2" layer between the ground surface and the snow. Life is relatively plush for a mouse under the snow. The ground debris and fallen weeds usually yield an abundant supply of seeds. The temperatures under the snow are constant and there is no fear of predators. The mouse must keep a breathing hole open to the surface to ensure an adequate supply of oxygen. If it comes to the surface, which it occasionally does, its dark body becomes very conspicuous against a white background. Hence,