

# NEWS AND NOTES

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DECEMBER MEETING REPORT. The Dec. 7th meeting finalized plans for upcoming Christmas Bird Counts. Considerable discussion took place on the format of the proposed poster on Island birds. In an effort to increase the number and quality of natural history and environmental entries in the provincial science fair, the value of prizes was increased and science teachers are to be sent promotional letters. John Wright reported on the project to locate Island natural history specimens now housed in museums across the continent.

Dan McAskill of the P.E.I. Dept. of Forestry gave an illustrated talk on the trees of Prince Edward Island. He recounted the various influences and the changes they have brought about on Island forests over the past few hundred years, resulting in the kinds of woodlands we have around today. Dan outlined various management options available to woodlot owners wishing to enhance their properties for commercial, recreational or aesthetic purposes. The numerous questions from the audience indicated the high degree of interest and appreciation for the speaker. Thanks Dan for a most informative evening.

JANUARY MEETING REPORT. The annual meeting of the P.E.I. Natural History Society was held on Jan. 14, 1983. The treasurer indicated a balance of \$882.50 on Dec. 31, 1982, plus about \$1200.00 in the book account. There are currently about 172 members. Dan McAskill reported on recent activities of the Island Nature Trust, drawing particular attention to the public meeting in Tracadie Cross on Jan. 12 to discuss the gateway and fencing proposals to protect the foredunes at Deroche Point. Winston Johnston presented an update on the Canadian Nature Federation. Geoff Hogan in his President's report gave a very thorough account of the concerns and activities of the society during 1982. Harry Baglole outlined the recently released Lord Report on museum development on P.E.I. and strongly urged the N.H.S. to voice its views on the topic, as our society is in a particularly good position to speak on behalf of the need for natural history museum facilities. New membership rates of \$2.00, \$4.00 and \$5.00 were adopted, but will not affect members already paid up for 1983. The following officers were installed: President Geoff Hogan, Vice-President Gerald MacDonald, Past-President Rosemary Curley, Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mallett (assisted by Joyce MacLeod), Directors Julie Singleton and Jane Symmes.

The evening's speaker was David Cairns of Carleton University, who showed slides and spoke on the western Hudson Strait region of the Canadian Arctic. He described ongoing research on Thick-billed Murres and Black Guillemots in the Digges Island area, contrasting the 'oasis' level of productivity found there with the barrenness and low productivity characteristic of most of the Arctic. Thank you David for a very enjoyable evening.

GULL ATTACKS MERGANSER. (Dan McAskill observed the following interesting incident during the P.E.I. National Park Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 19.) A Great Black-backed Gull was seen attacking a Common Merganser, both with beak strikes and the grasping of the neck and wings, accompanied by vigorous shaking of the head.

In the latter the merganser was lifted clear of the ground and tossed back on it after several shakes. Our approach caused the gull to leave and the merganser flopped its way to the water. The outer appendages of the left wing appeared broken and the bird could not fly. On reaching the water it swam out from shore in short bursts, each of which was followed by a rest period with the bill touching the water and the head canted to the side. After 15 minutes the bird was swimming quite well.

