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Newsletter No. 18

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November 1976

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#### NEXT MEETINGS

Date: Tuesday, November 2, and Tuesday, December 7, 1976  
Time: 8:00 P.M.  
Place: Provincial Health Building, 3rd Floor, Room 47  
Program: Margaret Mallett will tell us about her trip to the Magdalen Islands this past summer. Come and be prepared to enjoy some of Margaret's excellent photography.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

We now have 111 paid-up members. It was pleasing that several persons sent in their dues in response to the special reminder. If you mail your 1976 dues, please make cheques payable to the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island, c/o Miss Margaret Mallett, 53 Fitzroy Street, Charlottetown.

The attractive NHS crests in the design of our logo are available for \$3.50 each.

"WINDS OF SEA AND WOOD" is available at \$1.35 each or \$1.50 by mail. Many people have read it and say they have found it delightful. For Christmas it would make a thoughtful remembrance. Easy on the pocket-book, too.

JUNIORS - you have been very silent lately! Surely you have a story or a poem about Fall, Winter, Snow or your favorite outdoor winter activity. Send your article to: Kathy Martin, Biology Department, University of Prince Edward Island.

Watch for our Natural History ads on television this fall. CBC Television has informed us that they will begin showing them soon. If you see one of these ads and like it, possibly you could write or phone CBC and express your appreciation to them.

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#### STRAW STORM

On the bright and sunny first day of October, I took a break from my shingling duties in Springton to glance at the blue sky above. What I saw was a trio of ravens circling in tight formation, each occasionally making quick manoeuvres to intercept some invisible quarry. As crows and ravens normally lack the speed and agility needed to take prey on the wing, this unusual behavior caused me to drop my hammer and take a closer look.

What I saw was a column of wispy particles reflecting golden in the sunshine, and reaching several hundred feet into the sky. Gradually, the mysterious column descended, ravens in its wake, and the golden particles resolved themselves into strands of straw.

On Prince Edward Island, warm air updrafts are seldom swift enough to pick up objects, but in this case, the sun-warmed stubble of a nearby strain field apparently radiated sufficient heat skyward to create an updraft strong enough to suck straw and rubble off the ground. The duty officer at the airport weather station had never heard of such a thing on the Island, but one York farmer reports having seen whole stooks of strain sucked into the sky, many years ago.