

store. Phone 368-6600.

If you know of someone, a group, or an agency that has been instrumental in the protection of our Island's natural areas through protection, lobbying, education or some other action, please consider nominating them for an Island Nature Trust award. All it takes is a letter describing the individual or group's activities. Supporting documentation such as newspaper clippings or reports is helpful. The deadline for submissions to the Executive Director, Island Nature Trust, P.O. Box 265, Charlottetown, PE C1A 7K4 (Fax 902-628-6331) is March 28th. (adapted from INT release)

The Canadian Wildlife Federation is conducting a coast to coast butterfly survey this year. If you would be interested in participating, please contact CWF at 2740 Queensview Drive, Ottawa, ON K2B 1A2. (adapted from Toronto Field Naturalist 464, Dec 1996).

Congratulations go out to two very committed Islanders who were honoured for their contributions to our natural heritage by the P.E.I. Museum and Heritage Foundation. Dr. Ian MacQuarrie was presented the Award of Honour during the Heritage Awards Dinner held at Confederation Centre. Ms. Diane Griffin was honoured with the Meritorious Achievement Award during the Heritage Day proclamation ceremony by the Hon. Gilbert Clements.

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has commenced a new bird research project titled "Birds in Forested Landscapes". This project will focus on the study of the habitat requirements of seven species of thrushes as well as the Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk. By collecting critical data on distribution and nesting success of these species, participants will help with the development of conservation strategies to help forest-bird populations. To obtain a sampling kit, contact the BFL, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850, call 607-254-2440, or e-mail birdeducation@cornell.edu

Birdwatching and hiking topped the ten fastest-growing outdoor recreation activities in persons 16 years or older in the U.S. according to a recent National Survey on Recreation and the Environment. The respective growth rates were 155.2 and 93% between 1982 and 1995. (adapted from Kennebecasis Naturalist Society Newsletter #19 Feb. 1997)

ANIMAL AND PLANT SIGHTINGS:

Compiled by J. Dan McAskill

The winter to date has been surprisingly mild. The first significant snow in the central part of the province occurred on Nov. 3 (DW). On Dec. 20th, a severe wind storm hit the Island with winds gusting to 130 km/hr. Individual trees were snapped off or blown over in many places and the car ferry John Hamilton Gray was swept onto a sandbar and, despite efforts to free it, remained in place for over a day. A severe ice storm laid down a coating of ice 1/4 inch thick on tree branches and caused considerable twig and branch breakage on January 11 and February 22-23.

BIRDS: Also refer to the Christmas Bird Counts which are not covered in the following summary. **Great Blue Heron** - 1 at North River Causeway in mid-Dec. (DWa), 2 at North Rustico and 1 at Brackley Beach on Dec. 21 (DWa), 1 flying at Summerside on Jan. 11 (GMa), 1 at Haunted Woods Trail in Jan. (JM, MR); **Canada Geese** - 3 at Ellen's Creek on Jan. 14 (JDM), 35 at Orwell on Jan. 19 (JDM, BB), 7 at Cymbria on Feb. 16 (JDM, BB); **Mallard** - 15 at Cavendish Pond on Nov. 9 (GMa, SE), 31 [19 in ♂ plumage] at Ellen's Creek on Feb. 16 (JDM, BB); **Black Duck** - 150 at Summerside Harbour on Nov. 10 (GMa, ES), 250 at Ellen's Creek on Jan. 8 (JDM), 285 at Ellen's Creek and 0 at North River on Feb. 16 (JDM, BB); **Northern Pintail** - 6 at Summerside Harbour on Nov. 10 (GMa, ES), 2 ♂ and 1 ♀ at Murray River on Feb. 12 (FRC), 2 ♂ feeding in small pond at Mayfield on Feb. 16 (JDM, BB); **Lesser Scaup** - 300 at Cavendish Pond on Nov. 9 (GMa, ES); **Common Goldeneye** - 1,100 at North River Causeway, 54 at West River Causeway, 1 at Desable, 4 at Hunter River, 5 at New Glasgow, 61 at Rusticoville, & 117 at Oyster Bed Bridge on Feb. 16 (JDM, BB); **Barrow's Goldeneye** - 1 ♂ at Vernon Bridge on Jan. 19 (JDM, BB), 2 ♂ at Montague on Feb. 12 (FRC), 6 ♂ and 4 ♀ at North River Causeway & 5 ♂ & 4 ♀ at Oyster Bed Bridge on Feb. 17 (JDM, BB), 1 ♂ hybrid Barrow's/Common Goldeneye at North River Causeway on Feb. 16 (JDM, BB); **Goldeneye** - 75+ at Gough's Bridge this winter (GMa); **Bufflehead**