

NOMINATIONS CALL!

The terms of the current Executive Committee expire at the January meeting in 2003. If you would be interested in serving on the Executive or any Society Committees, please contact the Nominating Committee Chairperson, Ben Hoteling (675-2036). Thanks.

SOCIETY'S WEB PAGE LAUNCHED:

A Society milestone was achieved in October with the launch of the Natural History Society's web page. This site provides Society members and all others interested in the Island's natural history with a ready source of information on many topics. The site's features include:

Information on the Society:

- Purpose
- Background
- Membership
- Activities

The Environmental Calender:

- Events of potential interest to naturalists

Island Naturalist Newsletter

- Subscription information
- Information on how to access back issues
- Feature Articles (under development)

Birds and Birding:

- Recent Sightings and Submissions
- Bird Counts
- Bird Identification (with links, courses, publications)
- An easily printable Field Checklist of Birds, P.E.I.

Links and Learning Resources

- E-mail Response
- Photographs by various Society members

The site's url address is www.isn.net/~nhspei

THE 2002 NEIL BENNETT AUTUMN BIRDING CLASSIC:

by Dan McAskill

Establishing dates for events weeks before they happen invariably leads to some interesting journeys. Such was the case with this year's Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic, the Island Nature Trust's fund-raising bird count for which the Natural History Society provides the lead birding team. This week opened with Hurricane Lily entering Louisiana from the Gulf of Mexico and tracking northeasterly. While certainly not a weather event for the Island like Hurricane Gustof in September, the forecast for Saturday, October 5th forebode strong southerly winds commencing at 40 to 60 km/hr and increasing to 60 to 80 by mid-day with 5 mm of rain and the winds to shift to southwesterly. Our plans to start acoustic owling at 3:30 am were thus altered after obtaining this forecast. The team members, Ray Cooke, Eric and Jim Marcum and myself, were able to enjoy sleep until we arose to travel to our assembly point in Sherwood for 5:00 am. As we arose, the wind forecasts were right on track and, before the day was out, proved to be most accurate.

We were away on time from Sherwood and made our first owling stop near Ben's lake about 5:40 am. Our stop was in a hollow on the Klondyke Road and, despite the winds higher up, we could hear fairly well and enjoy the starlight sky in which the first clouds were appearing. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls slowly responded in the