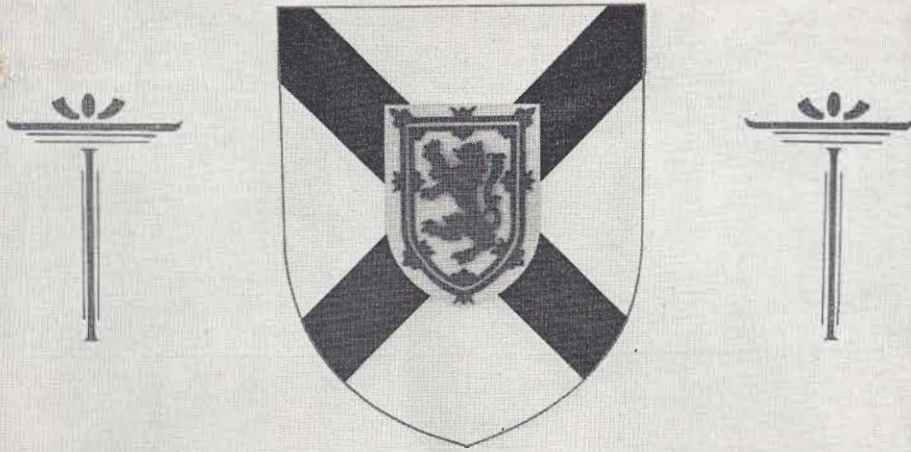


NOVA SCOTIA



MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF
THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

100 SPRING GARDEN RD.
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

Vol. 1

May, 1955

No. 1

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FOREWORD

By DR. H. P. MOFFATT

Deputy Minister of Education

Province of Nova Scotia

In recent years the Museum has expanded its activities and increased its effectiveness but the extent of the change is not widely realized. The Museum has a story to tell, of its exhibits, of its collections and research and of its educational services. The Museum Newsletter, of which this number is the first, will help to make these things better known. The Department of Education wishes success to the new publication and hopes that one of its results will be the wider appreciation and use of the Museum by schools and teachers throughout the province.

EDITORIAL

Modern progress seems to be effected, or at least accompanied by a flood of printer's ink. Since increasing complexity implies improving communications, the printer's ink may be unavoidable. Even so, one should not add to its quantity carelessly.

I should like to say at the very first, then, that the need for this publication has been felt for some time. Very often indeed, we have been told that more people should know what is done in our Museum; surprise at the variety and complexity of our efforts is the usual reaction. Many whose interest we should like to have, are extremely busy and do not find the time to know us well. Often we have wanted a medium for announcements of acquisitions or new activities. Primarily then, this paper will be a newsletter of the Museum.

There are related organizations, some more or less under the wing of the Museum, whose activities are proper material for our paper. These will be served as well may be.

Beyond such primary purposes, the publication may be found useful in ways which will become evident with experience. We hope our public will take part and offer its criticisms and suggestions; we like our communications to operate both ways.

Without further ado, we offer the first number of our Museum Newsletter.

D. K. CROWDIS,

Director.



Miniature habitat group of Woodland Caribou on exhibit at the Nova Scotia Museum of Science.

MUSEUM EXHIBITS

No. 1 WOODLAND CARIBOU

This exhibit, made by Louis Paul Jonas of Hudson, N. Y., shows a small band of caribou as they might have appeared in Nova Scotia surroundings. The background is a composite scene painted from photographs of the Pleasant Bay and Rig-wash Valley areas on the Cabot Trail, Cape Breton Highlands National Park — the last stronghold of this majestic member of the deer family that at one time roamed the whole province.

The Woodland Caribou, a geographical race of that same species that includes the European Reindeer and the still abundant Barren Ground Caribou of the Canadian Arctic, formerly occupied much of the coniferous forest belt south of the arctic regions from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia to British Columbia. Maine and Nova Scotia were at the southern fringe of its territory and here especially, forest fires, shooting and human settlement, together with a warming climate, made its extermination only a matter of time. It is not known just when the last of the Cape Breton caribou disappeared, but it might have been less than 30 years ago. Herds still exist in the wild interior of Newfoundland, and the alpine tundra atop the Shickshock Mountain range of the Gaspé Peninsula.

The caribou is the only American deer in which both sexes have antlers, although those of the female are noticeably small. They inhabit that kind of country where spruce and fir forest alternates with open barren and muskeg — the best example here being the terrain seen from the Cabot Trail where it goes over the high ridges of French and North Mountains in the National Park. Like other deer, caribou are browsers, but also have a great fondness for a lichen called Reindeer Moss (*Cladonia rangiferina*) that grows in spongy gray mats on the ground in bogs and barren land. Hence it is quite likely that great expanses of unspoiled muskeg or tundra are necessary to support a caribou herd.

D. C. F.



ORGANIZATION OF THE NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

By Harrison F. Lewis

Though resident and visiting ornithologists have long studied birds in Nova Scotia and many scientific papers on the subject have been published, lack of organization of Nova Scotians interested in birds has handicapped ornithological work in this province. Many problems relating to birds, both migrant and resident, can best be solved by a co-operative, organized approach. Moreover, it is encouraging and stimulating to those interested in birds of any area to have ready means for mutual exchange of information and for joint field activity.

Thus there is ground for believing that an important milestone in Nova Scotian ornithology was passed on January 26 of this year, when, at a public meeting in this Museum, the Nova Scotia Bird Society in association with the Nova Scotia Museum of Science was organized, primarily for study of the birds of the province. Of some 75 persons present, 46 became members of the new Society and paid their first annual fee of \$1.00 that evening. At the time of writing the paid-up membership had risen to 163. Membership is widely distributed in Nova Scotia and some members reside in other provinces and New England. All those who apply for membership and pay an annual fee before April, 1955, will be enrolled as charter members.

The officers of the Nova Scotia Bird Society are: President, Robie W. Tufts; Vice-President, C. R. K. Allen; Editor, Harrison F. Lewis; Secretary-Treasurer, Willett J. Mills, 100 Spring Garden Road, Halifax; and additional members of the Executive, F. A. Lane, D. K. Crowdis and Rev. Calder Fraser.

The first ornithological problem to which the Society will devote its attention is discovery of the route and timing of spring migration into and across Nova Scotia by four common birds, namely, robin, tree swallow, ruby-throated hummingbird and nighthawk. Instructions and report forms are distributed to members by the Secretary. Accurate identification of the birds recorded is, of course, essential, if the records are to be useful. Better no record than an erroneous one. After information collected has been organized and analyzed, results will be made known to all concerned.

It is also suggested that, wherever possible, members should form local groups and arrange for field trips together.

Richness of the winter bird life of Nova Scotia is well shown by the Christmas Bird Counts made in three areas in the week extending from December 27, 1954, to January 2, 1955.

The count taken at Wolfville on December 27 produced a list of 39 species, among which those of greatest interest were a Black-bellied Plover, 14 Barrow's Golden-eye Ducks and 3 Bald Eagles.

The count taken in West Middle Sable and vicinity, Shelburne County, on December 31 resulted in a list of 30 species, of which the most interesting were a Killdeer and a flock of 58 Cowbirds.

In the Halifax area, on January 2, observers also discovered 30 species. Their finds of special interest were a Dovekie, a Baltimore Oriole and a flock of 78 Cowbirds.

BOOK NOTES

Along with other pamphlets on Birds, The Nova Scotia Bird Society distributes to its members a bird key by the late E. Chesley Allen to enable the complete novice to have some guide to bird identification.

Eventually, however, most people have recourse to Roger Tory Peterson's field guide to the birds which is the most popular book of its kind. Peterson has also done all the illustrations for his book. It gives field marks of all species found east of the Rockies, and is sponsored by the National Audubon Society. It is published by Houghton Mifflin Co. price \$4.00. Both the Halifax Memorial Library and the Museum Library have copies for reference.

NEWS ITEMS

Our Director, Mr. D. K. Crowdis, who has the honour of being the only Canadian member of the Council of the American Association of Museums, attended the winter meeting of the Council of the A. M. A. in New York on January 14, 1955, held in the town house of John D. Rockefeller III.

Robert C. Hermes has had the distinction of being our first Screen Tour lecturer and of being the first to return to us. In September 1953, he brought his beautiful, "Bonaventure Diary" and on March 28 this year his "Once upon an Island". Careful as we are of making comparisons, we must say that we do not get better lecturer-photographers than Bob Hermes.

Since the advent of television to Halifax, two members of the Museum staff have appeared in the television program "Gazette." Lloyd Duncanson, the Museum taxidermist, first appeared with a 34 lb. wild-cat that had been captured in the vicinity of Halifax and had been brought in to the Museum. On a second occasion he explained something of the art of archery, and mentioned the activities of the Micmac Archery Club of which he is President. When out hunting in the Annapolis Valley one weekend, he shot a 38 lb. wild-cat with his bow and arrow, the which feat brought him once more to viewers together with the wild-cat and his bow and arrow.

Mr. Victor Paskevsky, biologist, appeared with the Museum's 3½ year old live alligator and the black indigo snake. He gave a talk on the characteristics of reptiles and amphibians.

On Monday, April 4th. Mr. Crowdis appeared on television in the programme "Gazette". He showed many examples of Museum exhibits, and explained how some were the real thing while others have to be made to scale in order to fit into the museum, e. g. the mastodon. The allotted time passed only too soon, but Max Ferguson, the master of ceremonies, promised viewers that Mr. Crowdis would be back again.

HIBERNATING BUTTERFLIES

On the first warm, fine days of March or April, our readers might see medium-to large-sized, brownish butterflies, sunning themselves and frolicking on wood roads and trails, or in sunny woodland glades.

These butterflies are known as the Anglewings, because of the sharply angled, ragged-looking wing margins. This curious wing form contributes toward their remarkable ability to simulate, when at rest, a dried withered leaf. Above they are quite brightly colored, but underneath, the resemblance to dead leaf, bark or lichen is unmistakable. Some even play possum when captured, dropping motionless to the ground or lying flat on one side on the palm of your hand. They are wary and strong fliers, however, and must be approached with extreme caution. Anglewings have not been abundant in Nova Scotia for many years, but we have about 8 species belonging to two genera — *Nymphalis* and *Polygonia*.

Most familiar is the handsome Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*) — a large deep purplish-brown butterfly with yellow-bordered wings and a row of blue submarginal spots. Most of the *Polygonias* look very much alike — burnt orange and black above, mottled gray or brown below, with a small but distinct silver mark right in the middle of the hind wing beneath. Unfortunately all the Anglewings that appear in the Spring are a bit faded, and for a good reason. Now they are about seven months old, and have spent the winter in the adult state, hibernating in some old hollow stump, in a crevice under loose bark, or anywhere that afforded shelter. They begin to stir and fly about as soon as the sun is strong enough to promote activity. An occasional one will make an appearance on a mild day in January or February and such an event not infrequently makes the local press.

Later in the Spring, the Anglewings lay their eggs mostly on willow, alder, birch, elm, nettles or hop vines, each species, to its own preference, and in a week or so the eggs hatch. The spiny but often beautiful caterpillars mature during early summer, transform to chrysalids and may emerge as butterflies any time after August 1st. Two or three of our species feed up very quickly and produce two generations during the summer. The first brood is short-lived and does not hibernate, but gives rise to the late summer generation which does.

The new adults sun themselves and fly irregularly during the Fall until the cold weather of November finally forces them into hibernation. And so the cycle is completed.

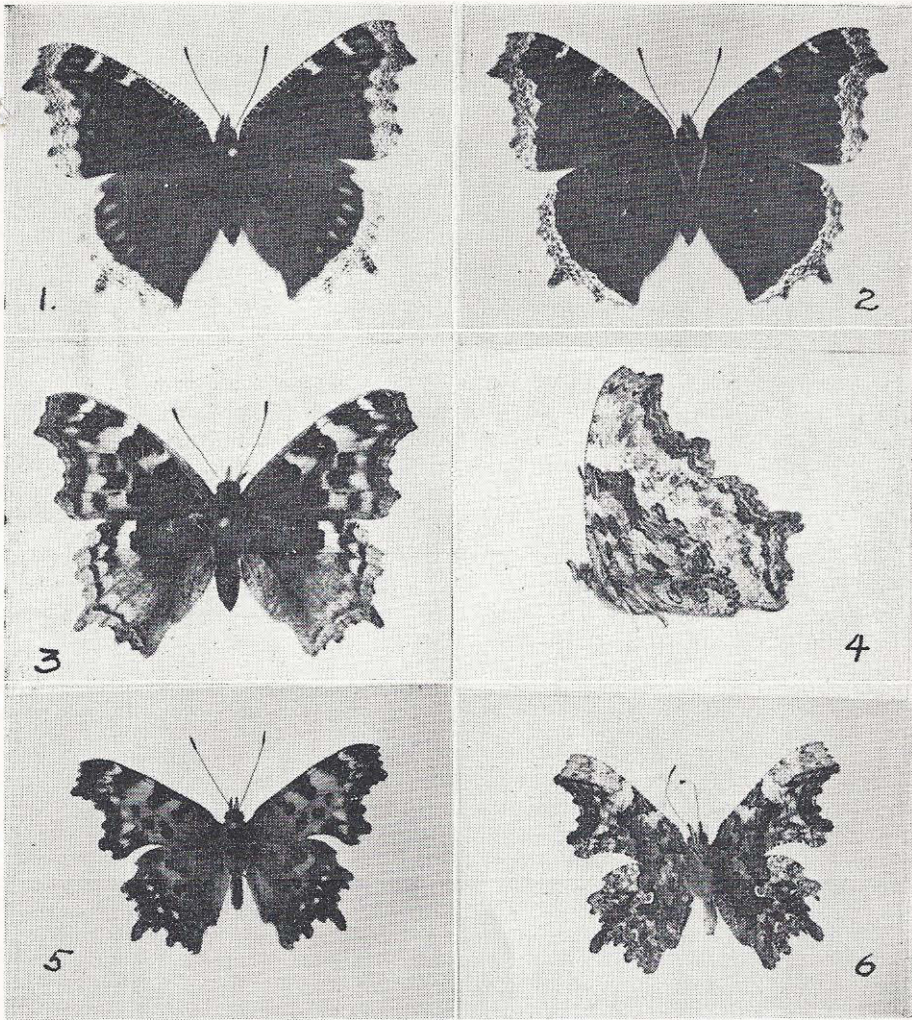
D. C. FERGUSON.

THE LEPIDOPTERA OF NOVA SCOTIA PART 1, MACROLEPIDOPTERA

By Douglas C. Ferguson

Proc. Nova Scotian Inst. of Science (Halifax), vol. 23; pp. 163-375, 16 pls. Feb. 1954

Douglas C. Ferguson, Entomologist on the staff of the Museum of Science, and a native Nova Scotian, has brought out an excellent publication on the Lepidoptera of Nova Scotia. It has been most favorably reviewed both in the Lepidopterists' News, 7 Jan. 1955, which says, "any lepidopterist whose interests include the Northeast will find this an essential publication", as well as in the Feb. 1955 Number of Canadian Entomologist, which refers to it as . . . "a valuable reference to all students of Lepidoptera for many years".



1. Morning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*).
2. " " , underside.
3. Compton Tortoise (*Nymphalis j-album*).
4. " " , underside.
5. Green Comma (*Polygonia faunus*).
6. " " , underside.

CALENDAR

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS. — Yearly series of 5 lectures, September to May. Information may be had from Miss Phyllis Whynacht, Nova Scotia Museum of Science, Spring Garden Road, Halifax.

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY. — Formed January 11, 1955. President, Robie D. Tufts. Secretary-Treasurer, Willett J. Mills, 100 Spring Garden Road, Halifax. Membership fee, \$1.00 per annum.

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY — HALIFAX CENTRE. — At King's College, last Tuesday of every month. President, B. J. Edwards, Secretary, G. W. G. Allen, Treasurer, M. H. Goodwin. Annual fee, \$3.00. Mail to the Halifax Centre, 13 Yukon St., Halifax.

NOVA SCOTIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE. — October through May, first Monday of every month. President, Dr. H. D. Smith, Recording-Secretary, Dr. Alex. McDonald. Corresponding Secretary, Dr. P. L. Hoogland, P. O. Box 429, Halifax. Treasurer, J. I. Dingle.

DAWSON GEOLOGICAL CLUB. — At Dalhousie Engineering Building. Fortnightly, January through May. In Fall 3 or 4 field trips. Annual fee \$1.00. President, C. Nixon, Vice-President Professor G. V. Douglas, Secretary John Douglas, Treasurer, A. Keddy.

HALIFAX WEST FISH & GAME ASSOCIATION. — Meets at call of President. Annual fee \$1.00. President, M. H. Sarty, Vice-President, Newman MacLean, Secretary, Don Mackenzie, Chairman of Membership Committee, W. S. Dickie, 17 Belmont Rd., Halifax. Treasurer, E. J. Vincent.

MUSEUM HOURS

MONDAY thro FRIDAY.....9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SATURDAY.....10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SUNDAY.....2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

OFFICE HOURS.....9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Vol. 1 of the Museum Newsletter will consist of 5 numbers to appear throughout the year.

Copies of each number will be available at the museum at 10c each.