



# Island Nature Trust Update

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## A Bird of a Different Colour

## In This Issue . . .

When the writing of this issue of *Update* started, it was quite different from the end result. On re-viewing the table of contents to the right, it is clear we are into birds for this issue—bird watch, bird raffle, bird count, bird feeding, bird feed, bird books, bird conservation and bird areas.

At the last minute, as we had more content than we could handle, we have decided to postpone the “Donor Issue” to January and make sure we got all of our donors in 2010 thanked—not just those who donated up to November. So, with that, it has become a bird issue. More by accident than design!

In this issue, you can join us as a volunteer at one of five Important Bird Areas, or participate in citizen science with Project Feeder Watch, or perhaps you would like to just feed the birds with seeds that help to conserve them and their habitat. In any case, there is lots of news and opportunities in *Update* this time.

Things at the office are quieter than the mid-summer project madness and getting quieter as we ap-

proach December. More meetings though, and many of them are jammed into the month of November in preparation of the craziness of December. If you are visiting the office please, check ahead to be sure you won't be left out in the cold.

Check out the Environmental Calendar on page 8 for many great events that will educate and entertain. We would love to see you at any and all of these nature related events.

Get out to a natural area near you to enjoy crisp fall weather, fall birding and clear views of woods and shore. Our natural areas are all open to the public, but most can also be used by hunters. Please take care when walking in the woods and fields in the fall. Be sure to visit salt marshes at this time of year, even after the leaves have fallen from the trees, the fall colours in a salt marsh are amazing—especially at sunset! Enjoy!

**We send you all Best Wishes for a wonderful Holiday Season and hope you will all have a terrific year in 2011!**

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## We Are . . .

*Island Nature Trust is a non governmental, registered charity dedicated to permanent protection of natural areas on Prince Edward Island. We acquire lands through purchase and donation and help private owners protect their own properties. We also protect species-at-risk, conduct conservation research, ecological restoration and public education. Donations are always welcome.*

## Our New Board of Directors

Island Nature Trust is governed by a Board of Directors of 12 to 16 members. Each member serves up to two three year terms.

In late September at the Trust's AGM, three new Directors were nominated and elected to the Board: Serge Serviant, Sandra McConkey and Dwaine Oakley. Please welcome these new volunteers to the Board of Directors of Island Nature Trust.

In November, a new executive was elected at the first regular meeting of the Board.

The new Board of the Trust includes the following:

**The Executive:**

**Fiep de Bie** — President

**Ben Hoteling**—Vice-president

**Jennifer Roma**—Secretary

**Donna Giberson**—Treasurer and UPEI Biology Department Representative

Four Island groups have representatives on the INT Board:

**Donna Giberson**—

UPEI Biology Department

**Tom LeClair**—

Museum and Heritage Foundation

**Lynne Douglas** —

Natural History Society of PEI

**Becky Petersen**—

PEI Wildlife Federation

**Remaining members of the Board:**

**Jim Jenkins**

**Barb MacDonald**

**Paul Michael**

**Serge Serviant**

**Sandra McConkey**

**Dwaine Oakley**

### Saying Goodbye to Two Board Members

**Dody Crane** served on the Board for two consecutive terms of three years, the longest time an elected Board member can serve. Dody will be sorely missed at the Board table for her wit, intellect and strong participation in many aspects of the Trust's governance. Dody served on 6 committees over the last few years and continues to work on the policies being developed by the Trust as well as the Land Acquisition Committee.

**Patrick Crawford** has decided to end his participation on the Board at the end of his first term of three years due to new work commitments that make it very difficult to attend Board meetings. Patrick has provided a fresh and active perspective and participation in the board's work and has served on the Policy and Planning Committee as well. Pat will also be very much missed at Board meetings and we all wish him well in his work.

### Welcome to Three New Board Members

**Serge Serviant** is a business advisor with extensive experience internationally and locally, supporting varied complex business and corporate initiatives, operations management, business development, deal closure and intellectual property licensing. Serge graduated as Jurist Consul in 1999 from University Paul Cézanne in Aix-en-Provence, France, with a Diploma of Higher Specialized Studies in Law, Accounting and Tax.

Serge's hobbies include biking and hiking. He has always loved the nature of the unique surroundings on Prince Edward Island, ever since he was a child visiting his grand-parents every summer. Serge appreciates living here and hopes to bring his contribution to Island preservation and continuity.

**Sandra McConkey** is a veterinarian with a PhD in pharmacology and a professor of clinical pharmacology at the Atlantic Veterinary College. Sandra has been passionate about nature since she was a child growing up in Ontario. Hobbies include birding and hiking. Sandra's children are of university age which gives her new found freedom to change her focus from a very busy family life revolving around sports to one that reflects her love of nature. Sandra would like to contribute in a meaningful way to preserving and sustaining the natural areas of PEI. She has been serving on the INT Land Acquisition Committee and involved in writing the Land Acquisition Policy statements for the Trust. Additionally, Sandra is a council member of the PEI Veterinary Medical Association and the Section head for the diagnostic portion of the Examination for Foreign Veterinarians.

**Dwaine Oakley** is an education assistant at Holland College for the Wildlife Technology course. Dwaine is best known for his expert birding skills and his digiscope photography of birds. Dwaine has been heavily involved in the Natural History Society of PEI for many years in a variety of executive positions and as a volunteer leader of many birding events. Dwaine has participated many times in the Bennett Birding Classic, helping raise thousands of dollars for the protection and management of natural areas.

## Nature Trust Staff

After December 10, the seasonal programs of the Trust will be completed for another year. Tracy MacDonald, Emily Swim and Justin Walsh will have completed their projects and we will be down to the winter complement of full-time staff:

- **Jackie Waddell**, Executive Director, coordinates and assists all staff where required, deals with land acquisition, land management and strategic planning.  
exdir@islandnaturetrust.ca
- **Barb McDonald**, Executive Assistant, operates all things financial and is responsible for office administration.  
admin@islandnaturetrust.ca

All staff can be reached by phone at (902) 566-9150 or 892-7513  
Fax (902) 628-6331

## Great Blue Heron Carving Raffle Tickets on Sale Now!

Want a chance to win a beautiful carving of the iconic Great Blue Heron? Fill out your tickets enclosed with this newsletter. They make a great stocking stuffer!

Many thanks again to Dave Broderick of Union, PEI for carving this life-sized heron. Each of the heron carvings is unique, with a character of its own. This heron is crouched low and looks ready to pounce on prey in a marsh.

Get your tickets now and often until April 29, 2011—the date of the Annual Fund Raising Dinner. These heron carvings have sold at the auction for over \$600. The winners from previous raffles are thrilled with their herons and have them proudly displayed at home where they can be admired daily. Tickets are just \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. Great Christmas gifts!



**Call Barb at the office at 892-7513 or come in to get yours now!**

## Phillips Feed Bird Seed Sale in November

Phillips Feed Service at 18 Exhibition Drive is having their annual fall sale of wild bird seed and the Nature Trust will benefit too! Be sure to get all your bird seed at Phillips as a part of the proceeds of the sales of all wild bird seed goes to the Trust—from all sales all year long. For the best prices, the annual fall sale is from Monday November 15 through Tuesday November 30. Jackie Waddell is going to be in the store to answer all your feeding and wild bird questions on Saturday November 20 from 9:00 AM to noon—Please note Phillips Feed closes at noon every Saturday. Jackie will return to the store on Wednesday November 24 from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Phillips has a wide diversity of bird feeds—sunflower, nyjer, millet, milo and much more—and a huge selection of feeders and accessories such as identification guides, hangers, anti window strike decals and more. The staff at Phillips is very knowledgeable too—if you can't get in while Jackie is there, be sure to pose your questions to Pat Malone—he is likely to come up with the right answer right away.

**See you at Phillips in November!**

## Some Great Christmas Gift Ideas

**Trees in Trust** - give a really green gift—“buy” a plot of land on one of our natural areas right here on PEI—or if you want to support another organization, you can now buy a plot in most Canadian provinces. Go to [www.islandnaturetrust.ca](http://www.islandnaturetrust.ca) and click on the links page and visit the Trees in Trust site to find out how you can buy a plot to suit your budget, print or send a certificate of the gift and get the GIS coordinates to visit the plot. This is a terrific gift for those that are really “green”.

**Bird Seed**—Buy a bag of bird seed at Phillips Feed Service on Exhibition Drive in Charlottetown and support Island Nature Trust with a portion of the proceeds in the process. The birds will thank you too!

### **Wild Island—Prince Edward Island’s Hidden Wilderness—by John Sylvester**

One dollar from every book sold will be donated to the Trust by award-winning photographer John Sylvester. There are a few copies of this astoundingly beautiful book at the Nature Trust office for sale. They are available at most bookstores on PEI.

**Note Cards**—At the Trust offices you can still get a package of four blank note cards and envelopes with illustrations by Connie Pound Gaudet for only \$2.20. We also have a package of 18 cards and envelopes with line drawings of historical buildings and places by Pam Hanic for \$11.00

**Heron Carving Raffle Tickets**—Buy a package of Raffle tickets as a great stocking stuffer!

**Give a Gift to Nature**—Make a cash donation to the Trust as a Christmas gift to family and friends. We can make up a certificate for gifts of \$20.00 or more for you to present, and you get a tax deductible receipt.

## Book Review *Birds of Canada*

There is a new bird guide out from Lone Pine Publishing—*Birds of Canada* by Tyler L Hoar, Ken de Smet, R, Wayne Campbell and Gregory Kennedy. This 528 page hardback is not intended to be carried in your pocket in the field but certainly has many of the preferred features of a field guide.

Good illustrations along with full colour photos of the subject birds are found on every page. Some “morphs” or colour phases are illustrated, but not as many as some other guides such as National Geographic’s Guide to Birds (all of North America).

Distribution maps are also on each page, although many are of all of Canada and therefore difficult to see some detail, including PEI—it’s hard to tell if the Island is included in some ranges. However, where a species is found in a very limited range, only that Province or smaller region is illustrated in the range map, giving good detail on the species range.

A colour coding system pouring from the table of contents page helps birders find the groups of birds more easily. This colour code continues on the back of

the dust jacket, enabling quick reference to 23 groups—pretty fine grouping, but still useful.

Each species page includes a general background on the characteristics of the bird including calls, habitat, unusual behaviours, population status, etc. The remainder of the text is divided into sections on: ID, Size, Habitat, Nesting, Feeding, Voice, and Similar species.

There are no sonogram illustrations.

Appendices include rare and accidental species, glossary, Selected references, a checklist and, of course, the index.

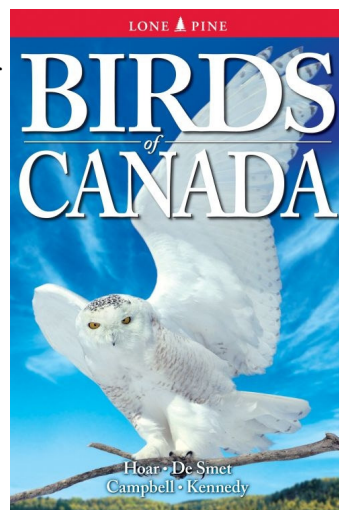
From the point of view of an intermediate birder, this is a useful guide and while I would be

reluctant to take it out in the field due to its bulk, I would keep it in the car or return to it at home for reference.

Look for this book in bookstores across Canada and compare to others of similar type. This edition should nicely fill voids in the bookshelves of beginner and intermediate birders.

Priced at \$39.95, this hardcover provides average value for a guide to Canada’s birds.

Jackie Waddell



## New Book on New Brunswick Naturalist Mary Majka

Mary Majka is a very well-known and respected naturalist that has brought many serious conservation issues in New Brunswick to the attention of the world. Known especially well for her involvement in conservation of shore birds and their habitat on the Bay of Fundy, Mary's life is now celebrated in a new book *Sanctuary*, written by biographer Deborah Carr. Published by Goose Lane, this book is well illustrated with many photos of Mary and the special areas she loves. Mary and Deborah are currently on a book tour in New Brunswick. You can meet Mary and the author and get a copy of this biography on November 4 at the St. John Free Public Library Central Branch at 12:00 PM and November 23 at 6:45 at Riverview Public Library. Visit [www.goselane.com](http://www.goselane.com) to get more information.

## Project Feeder Watch Starts Soon!

This year marks the 24th Project Feeder Watch season for Bird Studies Canada. Thousands of feeder watchers across North America have been submitting counts of birds at their feeder from mid-November to April for nearly a quarter century.



Downy woodpecker by Maria Corcacas

This is an easy and fun citizen science activity. Counting is simple and you have the option of sending in your data by mail or on-line. To register on-line, go to [www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw](http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw) or call 1-888-448-2473.

All materials are provided, with plenty of clear instructions on how to conduct the counts and submit the data. All you need to provide are feeders and feed and wait for the winter birds to come into your yard.

## Electronic Island Nature Trust "Update" Newsletters

While we continue to work on updating our web page and getting past issues of the newsletter there, you can help us save paper and postage and get information faster! You can achieve all of this by getting "Update" via E-mail. If you forward your e-mail address to Island Nature Trust, we will send you the newsletter electronically as a "PDF" file. Eighty-one members currently receive their newsletter this way, and we would love to see that number climb. Email us at [admin@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:admin@islandnaturetrust.ca) to request your newsletter in electronic form.



**Thank you!**

You can follow trends on the Project Feeder Watch web site and get the update at the end of the year. There is a small fee to participate, but this is a great program that you and you entire family can do from the comfort of your own home!

Were you one of many that had fewer birds at your feeders last year? Project Feeder Watch data shows that was a trend. The heavy cone crop and a mild winter with less snow in many parts of Canada were possible reasons for this lack of birds using feeders. Feeder Watch data showed the lowest average numbers of birds at feeders in Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces since the count began in 1987.

## Bennett Birding Classic—The Results

Adapted from an article by Dan McAskill in *The Island Naturalist*.

The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island and Island Nature Trust designed the Autumn Birding Classic in 1995 as a long-term fund raiser partnership for the Trust's land conservation program and as a bird monitoring system for the autumn. Re-named in 1999 as the Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic in memory of Neil's significant contributions to the Trust, this partnership has raised more than \$17,400.

In 2010, the Classic started at 3:00 AM on September 18. The expert team of Ray Cooke, Dwaine Oakley, Bill Bowerbank, and leader Dan McAskill started out from Sherwood. By day's end at 8:35 PM, they had traveled 364 km and walked about 2 km.

The Team started birding at the Hillsborough River bridge piers with hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants.

Some or all members were successful in obtaining Northern Saw-whet Owl, Barred Owl, Great-horned Owl, American Bittern, and Virginia Rail to respond to played calls.

At East Point at 8:30 AM, the team picked up hundreds of adult and some immature Gannets, about 100+ Black-legged Kittiwake, good numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls and small numbers of Common Tern. A few Parasitic Jaegers were attracted to the activity of the gulls, etc.

Woodland birds at East Point were nominal but scopes revealed shore-birds feeding in the beach. These included three Pectoral Sandpipers at

very short range and Least, White-rumped, Semipalmated Sandpiper an immature Piping Plover, many Semipalmated Plover and Sanderlings.

Three adult Bald Eagles circled over the team as they were leaving East Point. Later, two more and an immature circled northwestward. A chickadee's mob call brought in a Warbling Vireo—a rare find at this time of year.

During the balance of the day, most stops brought Black-capped Chickadees and a few Golden-crowned Kinglets. A few sites had groups of ten to twenty Yellow-rumped Warblers and a few Boreal Chickadees were found at a couple of sites. The team hoped to find some rarities at Wood Islands. Dwaine had seen hundreds of terns earlier in the week and Nova Scotia birders were still seeing the influx of southern rarities brought in by Hurricane/Tropical Storm Earl. Alas, there were no rarities. Then, brought attention onto a small gull sitting down on the sand. It was initially missed on the first sweep over the bar, but he picked out a larger black bill than the adjacent Bonaparte's Gulls. It was a Laughing Gull.

Dwaine was able to get first a confirming photograph and then was able to position himself onto the end of the dock where the light was perfect to capture incredible digiscope images of the Laughing Gull. Ray set up as well using a motor-drive digital camera and the Laughing Gull flew to a short range at-

tracted by Dwaine tossing part's of Ray's coveted eggplant sandwich onto the beach. Ray was able to capture images revealing a gull with missing feathers.

Other highlights of the day's outing were a Pied-billed Grebe at North Lake, three Hooded Merganser at Murray River, several Black-and-White Warblers at East Point and Campbell's Pond, good numbers of Northern Flickers (~20), a drake Wood Duck at the Community of East Point, a group of sixteen Ruddy Turnstone at Murray Head (near Cape Bear), American Kestrel at Kingsboro and White Sands, and Merlin at Lakeview and Wood Islands.

In total, the team observed 81 species, down significantly from last year's 88 and 2008's 108.

Thanks to the generosity of the many donors, the Trust's pledge collectors and team members collected pledges of just over \$1,000 for the 2010 Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic.

The Province of PEI has sponsored the Classic this year for \$500—many thanks PEI, for your support!



Northern Flicker—Shirley Gallant photo  
The birds seen during the Bennett Birding Classic are listed on page 7.....

## Bennett Birding Classic—the list

Pied-billed Grebe	Black Guillemot (2)
Northern Gannet	Rock Pigeon (Dove)
Double-crested Cormorant	Mourning Dove
Great Cormorant	Great Horned Owl (2)
American Bittern	Barred Owl
Great Blue Heron	Northern Saw-whet Owl (2)
Canada Geese	Belted Kingfisher
Wood Duck	Downy Woodpecker
American Wigeon	Hairy Woodpecker
American Black Duck	Northern Flicker
Mallard	<i>Warbling Vireo</i> (1)
Blue-winged Teal	Red-eyed Vireo
Green-winged Teal	Blue Jay
Ring-necked Duck	American Crow
Greater Scaup	Common Raven
Harlequin Duck (1)	Black-capped Chickadee
Common Eider	Boreal Chickadee
White-winged Scoter	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Hooded Merganser	American Robin
Common Merganser	European Starling
Laughing Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Red-breasted Merganser	Northern Parula
Bald Eagle	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Harrier	Black- and- White Warbler
American Kestrel	Common Yellowthroat
Merlin	Savannah Sparrow
<i>Virginia Rail</i>	Song Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Lincoln's Sparrow</i>
Semipalmated Plover	Swamp Sparrow
<i>Piping Plover</i>	White-throated Sparrow
Killdeer	Purple Finch (1)
Greater Yellowlegs	American Goldfinch
Lesser Yellowlegs	House Sparrow
Ruddy Turnstone	
Sanderling	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	
Least Sandpiper	
White-rumped Sandpiper	
Pectoral Sandpiper	
<i>Parasitic Jaeger</i>	
<i>Laughing Gull</i>	
Bonaparte's Gull	
Ring-billed Gull	
Herring Gull	
Great Black-backed Gull	
<i>Black-legged Kittiwake</i>	
Caspian Tern	
Common Tern	
UID Murre (1)	

**Note:** Species in italics are rarely seen here at this time of year. Where less than all the participants observed the species, the number of observers is noted in brackets.

Grand total—81 species

## Important Bird Areas Caretakers Program

The Important Bird Area Program is a project of Bird Life International and, here in Canada, the national partners are Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada. As an Affiliate of Nature Canada, Island Nature Trust has undertaken a small project this fall to work to create the first Island network of IBA Caretakers.

Important Bird Areas (IBA) are identified as internationally important to birds and exist worldwide. Nearly 600 IBAs have been identified in Canada alone. Here in PEI, there are 6 sites: Canavoy and Area Beaches, PEI National Park, Orwell Bay, Malpeque Bay, Bedeque Bay and Cascumpec Bay and Alberton Harbour.

IBAs are not protected by this identification. However, this international recognition of these areas does push provincial and local governments and other groups to install protection for all or part of the sites.

The IBA Caretaker program was established because we need to understand what is happening to IBAs in order to develop interventions to threats accordingly.

At the site level, IBAs need to be monitored in order to detect and act on threats in a timely manner, assess the effectiveness

of conservation efforts, expand and update site data, and provide IBA-based activities, from bird watching events to surveys.

IBA Caretakers are local community members who do much more than collect data. Caretakers share responsibility for the site, making it their own. They assess threats and report to partners who send that information on to an international network.

IBA Caretakers are a means for feedback and encouragement to jurisdictions for future protection and conservation. Caretakers benefit from participating in the IBA program in many ways, not the least of which is the development of new skills.

Nature Trust projects have monitored Piping Plover and Common Tern in the Mapeque Bay, Canavoy and Area Beaches and the Cascumpec Bay IBAs for many years, but never the entire IBA areas.

Are you interested in becoming an IBA Caretaker? All training and material is provided. You select an Island IBA site near your home or cottage and agree to monitor it (or a part of it for large sites) at least annually.

For more information, be sure to check out the IBA website at: [ibacanada.ca](http://ibacanada.ca)

## Environmental Calendar

- December 7— **Setting up Your Yard for Bird Photography**, Island Photographer, Shirley Gallant will speak at the Natural History Society of PEI meeting at 7:30 PM at the Farm Centre 420 University Ave Charlottetown.
- December 14 to January 4— **Christmas Bird Count**—throughout PEI volunteers are needed for this important count—contact Dan McAskill at jdmcaskill@pei.sympatico.ca
- January 1, 2011—**Renew your Island Nature Trust membership**—see the membership form below. Renew easily by mail or give Barb a call with your credit card information.
- January 4, 2011—The Natural History Society of PEI will hold its Annual General Meeting at 7:30 at the Farm Centre, 420 University Ave. Charlottetown. Guest speaker Dwaine Oakley will present “**Close up Views of Recent Bird and Other Sightings**” - remarkable digi-scope images of some PEI and region wildlife.
- January 19, 2011—**The Aliens are Coming!** The first presentation of the Confederation Centre Public Library nature Series for 2011. Invasive Alien Species—From Purple Loosestrife to Giant Hog Weed—what does this invasion mean to you and me—and native species? Invasive plants, few insects and a bird for good measure—learn more about these “Unwants” from Jackie Waddell—starts at 7:00 PM Confederation Centre Library, Charlottetown. Storm date Tuesday, January 25.
- January 28—**Wild Dogs and Cats of PEI**—O’Leary Public Library—starts at 6:30 PM. Jackie Waddell will narrate a slide show of wild dogs and cats found once, now and possibly in the future on PEI. Storm date is Friday, February 4.
- February 1—Natural History Society of PEI meeting and presentation “**On the Brink of Extirpation: Recovery Strategies for the Gulf of St. Lawrence Aster on PEI**” Kerry-Lynn Atkinson will present images and recent work on the recovery efforts for this extremely rare aster. 7:30 PM at the Farm Centre, 420 University Ave, Charlottetown.
- February 9—**Winter Birds of PEI**—more than feeder birds, what species are you likely to see and where on PEI? From owls to mergansers. Jackie Waddell presents at Stratford Public Library, Bunbury Road in the old Cotton Centre. Starts at 6:30 PM
- February 16—**Off-Shore Islands of PEI**—Confederation Library Nature Series—Jackie Waddell will show old and new images of the many small islands that surround our province. Starts at 7:00 PM at Confederation Centre Library. Storm date Tuesday February 22.
- April 29—**Island Nature Trust Annual Fundraising Dinner**—Don’t forget, this year the dinner will be at the **UPEI Wanda Wyatt Dinning Hall**. Lots of free and nearby parking, easy access off Belvedere Avenue and, as usual, we will have a fabulous array of raffle and auction items along with a delicious meal to make your night with the Trust a very special one! **Tickets go on sale in February—\$50.00 per person**

## Membership Form

Single Membership (\$20)                       Family Membership (\$25)                       Sustaining Membership (\$50)  
 Active Membership (\$100)                       Supporting Membership (\$250)                       Life Membership (\$500)  
 My donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ towards the Trust’s work is enclosed (*tax receipts are issued for all donations*).  
 I wish my donation to be invested in your Endowment Fund.  
 I prefer to pay via:  Visa                       MasterCard                       Amex                       Cheque                       Money Order  
 NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ TEL.: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRY DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return to: Island Nature Trust, P.O. Box 265, Charlottetown, PEI, CIA 7K4.*