



# ISLAND NATURE TRUST

September 2017  
Issue 138

## Island Nature Trust Quarterly

*Dedicated to the protection of Natural Areas on Prince Edward Island since 1979*

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### Summer 2017 Highlights

Summer 2017 was one for the books! This summer we had more projects running and staff hired than ever before. It was busy, but we got a lot of work done and had fun while we did it! We connected with a lot of Islanders and visitors, and recruited many new volunteers. We hope you enjoy this photo collage of our summer activities and hope you will join us next year as a volunteer or at one of our events!



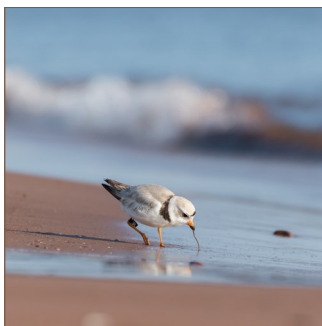
A Northern Saw-whet Owl captured by our Forest Bird Technician, Brett MacKinnon, in Townshend Woodlot



An American redstart after being banded at MacPhail Woods' MAPS bird banding station in June. Photo by Jim Aquilani



John Toner's class from Westisle School joined us for three days in May to help open up the trail in our Kildare Forest Natural Area



A banded piping plover feeds along the shore. Photo by Sean Landsman



Local bird bander, Fiep de Bie, being trained to band hummingbirds by hummingbird expert, Cindy Cartwright



Emily Doyle shares her knowledge of wild herbs at Rock Barra during a *Waters and The Wild* workshop



On August 14<sup>th</sup>, over 30 people joined INT staff and volunteers for a walk across the mud flats to St. Peter's Island. Photo by Paul Vreeland

# Supporter Profile



## Edward and Agnes Laughlin: Family & Livelihoods Woven into the Fabric of the Land

If you set out to describe to a visitor how intricately tied through many generations Island families are to our red PEI soil, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better example than Edward and Agnes Laughlin. Agnes grew up an O'Connor from "the cape" (Kildare Capes), one of ten children that helped farm the coastal land at the far western reaches of the Island. Edward also grew up farming in a family of eight in Sherbrooke near Summerside. When I sat down to chat with the two of them on a recent visit to the Island, the conversation on family and farming reached back in time to the 1800's. Trying to keep straight the many family connections along the way was the greatest challenge! Somehow, 2 O'Connor brothers married 2 Laughlin sisters while 2 O'Connor sisters married 2 Foley brothers... and then there was Edward and Agnes. And they didn't even meet in PEI, but hundreds of miles away in Ontario! After 61 years of marriage and a lifetime spent working in Ontario, it is clear that both still cherish their Island and their deep roots in red soil. It's brought them back for two months every summer for 64 years. Edward says he comes for the fish, but I suspect that it's more than that.

When they talk about the property they purchased at Foley's Pond in 1968, it's also clear how intimately connected their extended families were to this land. Agnes recalls picking potatoes there as a child and how she could see it from the O'Connor farm up the cape. In between was Jack's Gap, where local fishermen launched their boats and a boat factory once stood. Set between the barrachois (beach barrier) pond named after the Foley family and the shore of the gulf near what is now Jacques Cartier Park, the evidence of past farming here is masked by a canopy of white spruce woodland. At the water's edges, both fresh and salt, a community of wildlife now re-take the place of farmers tending crops.

Generosity and community spirit also percolate through the memories as I sit with these two. In between the banter and corrections of fact come stories of gifts. Edward's love of fishing brought him to North Lake and a fledgling rod & reel tuna fishery. In 1969 when he landed a 710 lb tuna, just the third individual caught in that fashion on the Island, the fish was cut up and sold in pieces to raise funds for the Alberton Catholic Church. When they decided it was time to part with their Foley's Pond property in 2011, Edward and Agnes donated it to Island Nature Trust rather than see it sold and potentially developed. Their wish was to see it protected, along with the web of linkages between nature and old Island families it embodies. If only that land could talk, how many stories it could tell!

This year, Edward and Agnes are the recipients of the Honourable J. Angus MacLean Natural Areas Award. As Angus was a former pupil of Edward's when he taught science at the Prince of Wales College, it seems another Island link in the web of inter-connectedness is being forged.

For your untiring support for and love of PEI, thank-you Edward and Agnes.

# Our Lands

## Adding to Townshend Woodlot, Our Best Example of Older Upland Hardwood Forest

Tucked away between Souris and the north shore lies some of our oldest remaining upland hardwood forest in PEI. A letter on file here in the INT office documents a plea sent to the Province in 1970 by Director of Forestry, Frank Gaudet, to acquire and preserve this unique example of near climax sugar maple – beech – hemlock woodland. In 1972, the Province acted on that plea and purchased roughly half of the area identified by the International Biological Program as a relatively intact example of an early eighteenth century hardwood forest. As opportunities arose, further additions to the protected land holdings in the area were made, including by Island Nature Trust in 2005 (50 acres) and 2010 (86 acres).



A view from the new property adjoining INT's Townshend Woodlot Natural Area. Photo by Brett MacKinnon



A pileated woodpecker observed in INT's Townshend Woodlot Natural Area in July, 2017. Photo by Brett MacKinnon

This summer, Island Nature Trust staff spent many hours documenting a rich nesting songbird community on the INT property in a small, productive and old forested wetland in the woodland interior. On their forays, they recorded the threatened Canada Warbler, eastern wood peewee, pileated woodpecker, and rare plants like the small round-leaved orchid (*Platanthera orbiculata*).

Now, we are so excited to announce that another 12 acres were added this summer to Island Nature Trust's holdings, buffering the oldest and most diverse forest from incursions of non-native plants and other vulnerabilities associated with fragmented landscapes. While the woodland in the newest addition is not as old, it is a healthy mix of upland hardwood and softwood tree species that will eventually become old forest if left to continue maturing.



The distinct round leaves of the rare small round-leaved orchid. Photo by Brett MacKinnon

Thank-you to all of our generous donors who helped to purchase this valuable addition to forest connectivity in the Townshend Woodlot!

## Featured Contributor



**Leanne Tol** is INT's Farm-land Birds Program Coordinator. She has also assisted on a number of other INT projects. Leanne holds a Master of Science degree in Zoology from Cape Town University, South Africa, where she studied the endangered African penguin. You can contact Leanne via email at [landbirds@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:landbirds@islandnaturetrust.ca)

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## 2018 Heron Raffle

Dave Broderick of Alberton carved and painted this beautiful Great Blue Heron! Every year, Dave donates a heron for us to raffle and raise funds for natural area protection and stewardship.

Raffle tickets for our heron are \$5 or 5 for \$20.

The draw will take place at the Annual INT Dinner in April, 2018.

Tickets will be available soon at the INT office in the Ravenwood building on the Experimental Farm in Charlottetown, or by calling 892-7513



You could win this hand-carved and painted Great Blue Heron!

## Partnerships

PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund:  
Supporting INT and Much More!



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
**WILDLIFE**  
CONSERVATION FUND

At Ravenwood, Barb sometimes wears multiple hats. She answers the phone for two other local non-profit organizations and collects and keeps their mail for them. It helps a little with paying the rent and keeping the lights on in this big old heritage house – turned office. Megan and Barb also administer the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund which helps to pay their wages. All of these multiple hats can lead to confusion though, when the general public gets a smidgeon of the story.

The PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund is a fund only. It represents the revenues generated from the conservation fee placed on hunting, fishing and angling licences and now also includes the \$10 fee tacked on to your vehicle licence when you purchase a Conservation Plate. Those revenues are used to fund roughly 50 projects each year through an application – award process. Projects must take place in PEI and must benefit wildlife; project goals can range widely, from supporting the fish hatchery that replenishes brook trout in PEI rivers affected by fish kills, to watershed restoration, wildlife research and nature education.

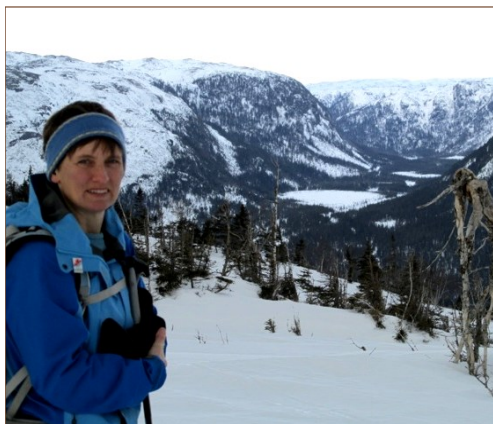
The process of applying to the fund and awarding money takes some time and resources. Since 2006, the review of applications and award decision-making has been done by a volunteer committee composed of individuals representing the groups that contribute money to the pot: hunters, anglers, trappers, conservationists and biodiversity experts.

Island Nature Trust administers the fund on a fee-for-service basis; we process applications, distribute them to committee members for review, communicate with award recipients, manage their reporting of results and manage the meetings and books for the fund. We are so appreciative of this steady source of income from year – to –year. It is one of those nuts-and-bolts type of supports that keep this wonderful organization going!

Visit [www.peiwcf.ca](http://www.peiwcf.ca) for more information on the Wildlife Conservation Fund.

# Volunteer Profile

## Kathleen MacNearney: President of the INT Board of Directors



**Kathleen MacNearney**  
Island Nature Trust President

Kathleen has generously donated her time and energy to the board of Island Nature Trust since 2011 and has served as President for the past year. She was born in Nova Scotia, but grew up in Alberta. “Busy” doesn’t begin to describe Kathleen! She is currently managing a 260 acre blueberry farm and 250 hives of honeybees with her husband Dave. Despite a busy family life (with 4 kids, all grown), owning a business and contributing to her community, somehow she carves out time for Island Nature Trust. When our Executive Director, Megan Harris (MH), asked her how and why she does it all, these were her responses!

**MH:** Do you consider that there were key parts of your early life that grew your love of nature? Are there specific memories that you’d like to share?

**Kathleen:** Yes. My father was a Wildlife Biologist who worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service. When he did his field work in the summers, he would move the whole family to the field with him. I spent many summers living in tents in the foothills of southern Alberta. When we were younger, my siblings and I were left

to amuse ourselves in the hills, woods, and streams while my Dad worked and my Mom was bird watching or performing one of the dozens of tasks required to keep us all going. Our pets were the animals (mice, snakes, toads, etc.) that were live-trapped on my father’s plots but did not fare so well and needed a little TLC before being released back into their habitat. We would nurse them in our tents and then let them go when they revived. My father’s summer students endured many hours of piggy-backing me through the woods with them while they collected their data. As we kids got older, we became more useful and eventually we were significant contributing members to my Dad’s field crew. The Canadian Taxpayer enjoyed many 100’s of hours of free labour from the time that my 5 siblings and myself spent helping my Dad during his field season and later, doing hours of filing in his office!

**MH:** What drove your decision to accept a volunteer position as a board member for INT?

**Kathleen:** I believe that the Island Nature Trust is providing a very important service to Prince Edward Island. Too often we realize that we never knew what we had until it’s gone. The founders of INT had the foresight to start protecting lands on PEI at a time before it was too late. As a result, we are well on our way to preserving many valuable parts of this island, both in terms of land and the species occupying the land. I absolutely support the mandate that the lands can still be used for hunting, fishing, and other recreational pursuits with a ‘Leave no trace’ mindset. When you believe in an organization, it’s not hard to accept a position to help out when asked. I felt honoured to be asked.

**MH:** What did you find most challenging during your time on the board?

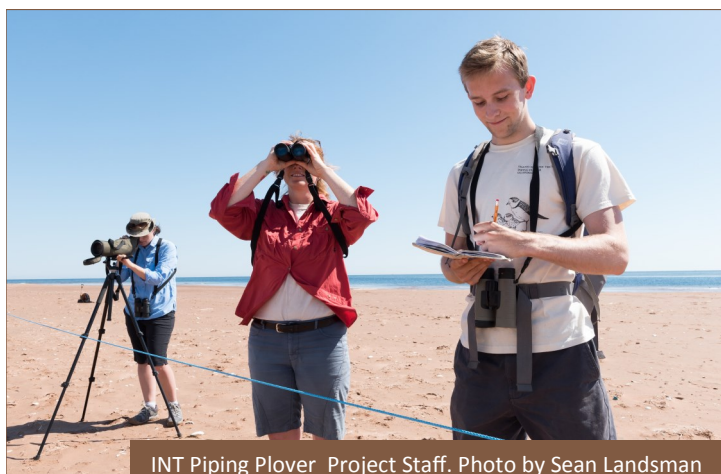
**Kathleen:** Frankly, it was to find the time to do the position justice. I have a lot on my plate at home and with our business and I would have liked to have spent more time at the INT office to get to know everyone better and have a better understanding of all of the ins and outs of the organization and its staff.

**Me:** What will you do with all of your spare time once your time on the board is complete?

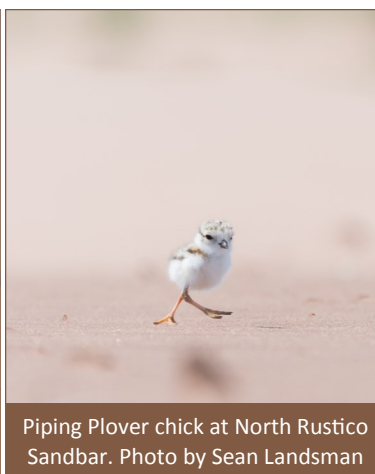
**Kathleen:** Ha ha! Blueberries and Honey keep me busy! Gardening and being a Mom and Grandma keep me busier! I am also currently serving on the board of another organization and have committed to helping out with our local Community School committee this year. I am also the head coach of the PEI Special Olympics Cross Country Ski Team. Hope for snow!! I won’t be bored!

Kathleen's term on the board of directors is coming to an end this month. We are so grateful for all of your energy and support over the years, Kathleen. Thank-you so much!

# Island Nature Trust Projects



INT Piping Plover Project Staff. Photo by Sean Landsman



Piping Plover chick at North Rustico Sandbar. Photo by Sean Landsman



A Plover parent watches as a newly hatched chick takes its first wobbly steps out of the nest. Photo by Shannon Mader

## Can Research Help to Recover the Piping Plover?

Contributed by: Shannon Mader

Despite extensive recovery efforts for Piping Plover in Eastern Canada, populations continue to decline. Since 2007, the number of breeding pairs has declined by a third. An Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) science review of the Piping Plover recovery program identified that the recovery of this species in Canada is likely limited by threats outside the country during the non-breeding season.

In response to this, ECCC is working with all of its provincial partners to undertake a five year mark and recapture study to gain a better understanding of what is happening to Eastern Canada Piping Plovers during winter and migration. The purpose of the study is to determine: where Eastern Canada breeding populations concentrate in winter, current survival rates of Eastern Canada juveniles and adults, and what is most affecting survival, and at what part of the annual cycle. Since 2013, 428 Piping Plover in Eastern Canada have been marked with flags (coded white, gray or black).

### What have we learned so far?

Where are Eastern Canadian Piping Plovers spending their winters? It is still early days for this study, but as preliminary results roll in, they are indicating that our birds are split between Florida and the Caribbean, with the largest proportion of birds overwintering in the Bahamas and on the Florida Gulf Coast. Research such as this is integral to re-assessing our efforts as we work to recover the Piping Plover on PEI and throughout Eastern Canada. We look forward to learning a great deal more as this study progresses.

### What can you do?

INTs Piping Plover Guardians are walking the beaches from April through September and they are the “eyes on the ground” that make this study possible. If you have a beach that you frequent on a regular basis, we would love to hear from you! Whether you see Piping Plover or not, sometimes knowing they are not there is just as important as knowing they are.

### Report all sightings of Piping Plover on PEI and elsewhere. If you see a Piping Plover:

1. Note the location (upper left, lower left, upper right, lower right) of each band on the bird, including band type (metal, colour band, flag (band with a tab sticking slightly out from the leg), band or flag colour, and in the case of the flag, code on the flag (2 or 3 letter/number code engraved on the flag; or no code engraved on the flag). Not all individuals will be banded.
2. Note the location and date of the sighting.
3. Note the condition of the flagged leg if the bird is banded.
4. If possible, include a photo of your sighting. A safe distance to approach is 50m.

This project received funding from:



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada



# Notes & News

## Trichomoniasis Outbreak

Over the summer you may have heard about trichomoniasis affecting birds, primarily finches, in Atlantic Canada.



A diseased finch. Photo courtesy of the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at the Pathology Department at AVC/UPEI

Trichomoniasis is an infectious disease caused by a parasite, *Trichomonas gallinae*, that usually infects the upper digestive tract of the bird. This results in an inability to properly swallow food and water. It can also cause the bird to regurgitate food and develop a swollen neck or throat as well as laboured breathing.

The disease appears to be mostly affecting the Purple Finch and American Goldfinch within Atlantic Canada, but birds of prey, and domestic birds can also be infected. The parasite is not a threat to humans or other mammals.

Infections seem to be most prevalent in the summer and early autumn. Transmission is more common during this time because the parasite is surviving longer outside of a

host when temperatures are warm, with infections tapering off in the winter in colder climates. The parasite also thrives in moist conditions.

Affected finches will appear puffy and slow moving, and will not be able to fly well. They may also have matted plumage around the face and will appear thin because they are unable to eat. If you see sick or dying birds exhibiting these signs, please report it to INT or to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at the Atlantic Veterinary College through their Facebook page

### What should you do?

- Take down bird feeders and bird baths and disinfect them thoroughly
- Return the feeders once temperatures are colder; this time of year birds still have plenty to eat!
- Once back in use, be sure to regularly disinfect your feeders and baths
- Seeds should be kept dry and baths should have clean water

## Upcoming Nature Events

**Sept 21<sup>st</sup>—Island Nature Trust AGM** — The meeting will include a recap of the last year's activities, presentation of the Hon. J. Angus MacLean Natural Areas Award, election of new board members, and a presentation by Dr. Pierre-Yves Daoust titled "Right Whales: An Unusual Mortality Event". Meeting starts at 7:00 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

**Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> — 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bennett Birding Classic**— Join a team or enter your own, and spend 24 hours searching for as many bird species as possible on PEI. Teams will compete to break the autumn record of 107 species found in this count. Call or email INT to register or for more information.

**Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>— 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Bennett Birding Event** — Calling all budding birders! Meet at Robinson's Island Trail Head, PEI National Park, at 9:00AM. Pick up at Traill Head at 11:00AM. Parents welcome! Birders under 5 years old must be accompanied by a parent. Participation by donation.

**Sept 25<sup>th</sup>—Hummingbird Walk and Talk**— Join us for a short talk on Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and INT's new volunteer hummingbird monitoring program. After the talk, we will go for a walk on the Trout River Trail and plant some native plants that attract hummingbirds! Event is from 1-4 pm at the Trout River Riparian Zone Natural Area, located along Highway 2 in Carlton, Prince County, just west of the intersection with Rte 14. Admission is free.

**Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>— Honouring Wild Salmon** — Join INT, Eliza Starchild Knockwood and Sile Post for a celebration of wild salmon in one of the remaining salmon rivers on PEI, Cross River. 1-4pm at Rock Barra Artist Retreat in Rock Barra, PEI. Admission is free.

**Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>— Nature PEI Meeting—The Secret Life of Bats** — Jordi Segers, the National White Nose Syndrome Scientific Program Coordinator of AVC's Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative will be the guest speaker for the meeting which starts at 7:30 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

**Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>— Capturing Fall Colours with Brenda Jones** — Bring your canvas and brushes and join us in trying to capture the beautiful fall colours of Rock Barra . 1-4 pm at Rock Barra Artist Retreat in Rock Barra, PEI. Admission is free.

**Nov 7<sup>th</sup> — Nature PEI Meeting—PEI Flora: Regional Themes and New Discoveries** — Sean Blaney of the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre will utilize photos and descriptions to highlight recent plant discoveries on the Island. He will be the guest speaker for the meeting which starts at 7:30 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

## Board of Directors

Island Nature Trust is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors of 12 to 16 members. Each member serves up to two three-year terms. Board members participate in a number of committees that help guide the work of Island Nature Trust.

This month we recognize two departing board members, Kathleen MacNearney and Paul Smith. Kathleen served 6 years on the INT Board and sat on the Fund Raising Dinner, Land Acquisition and Land Management Committees. Kathleen also served as President this past year. Paul served 4 years on the INT Board. Thank you both for your contributions to INT!

### Executive:

Kathleen MacNearney	President
Randy Dibblee	Vice-President (Nature PEI)
Rob MacKay	Treasurer
Donna Gill	Secretary

### Group Representatives:

Luke Peters	PEI Wildlife Federation
Linda Berko	Museum and Heritage Foundation
Kevin Teather	University of Prince Edward Island

### Remaining Board Members:

Sharon Clark  
 Joyce Dewar  
 Adam Hood  
 Carol Horne  
 Laura Kell  
 Paul Smith  
 Michael Walsh

### We are...

Island Nature Trust is a non-profit, private registered charity dedicated to permanent protection of natural areas on Prince Edward Island. We acquire lands through purchase and donation for protection and help private landowners protect their own properties through legislation and promotion of good land management practices. We also protect species-at-risk, restore lands and undertake public nature education.

### Donations are always welcome.

### Contact Us:

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### Find Us Online:

[www.islandnaturetrust.ca](http://www.islandnaturetrust.ca)



@peinaturetrust



Island Nature Trust



islandnaturetrust

## Support Island Nature Trust



18 Exhibition Drive, Charlottetown

Phillips Agri Services have your hummingbird feeding needs covered in the summer and your winter bird feeding needs covered in the fall and winter! And did you know that a portion of all wild bird seed and feeder sales from Phillips Agri Services, year-round, is donated to INT? Since the partnership was established in 2007, Phillips Agri Services has donated thousands of dollars to help our conservation initiatives!

**INT staff will be in-store at Phillips Agri Services on November 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.** Be sure to stop in with your bird feeding questions! Phillips Agri Services is open on weekdays from 8am to 5pm, or on Saturdays from 8 to 12pm!