



## Island Nature Trust Quarterly

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

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### Summer 2018 Highlights



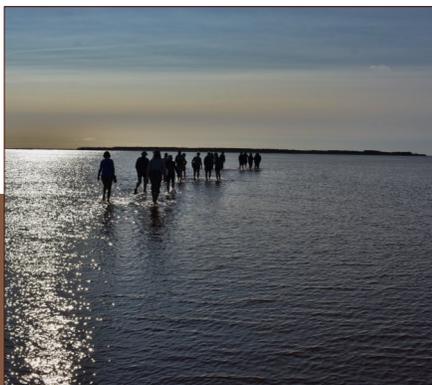
This was one of 8 known nests at Barachois Beach, North Rustico, this summer. This popular beach has become one of the most productive sites for Piping Plover on PEI, with 11 chicks fledged in 2018. It's also a popular beach for dog walkers, making it important to monitor this site & spread the word about sharing the shore!



Early in the summer, we delivered our beach-dune ecosystem field trips to Grade 7 students at Cavendish Beach. Students learned about the plants and animals that use our shores, and about how the water and wind shape these landscapes.



Through our Farmland Birds Program, we continued to connect with farmers and rural landowners to protect and monitor Barn Swallow and Bobolink populations this summer. This was the first year of the ALUS delayed hay incentive program to protect nesting Bobolink. We partnered with the ALUS program to monitor the presence of nesting pairs of Bobolink and delayed hay compliance in hayfields signed up under the program



In August, we held our annual walk across the mud flats to St. Peter's Island. The weather was beautiful and the water like glass. Due to intense interest, we plan to host two walks in 2019!

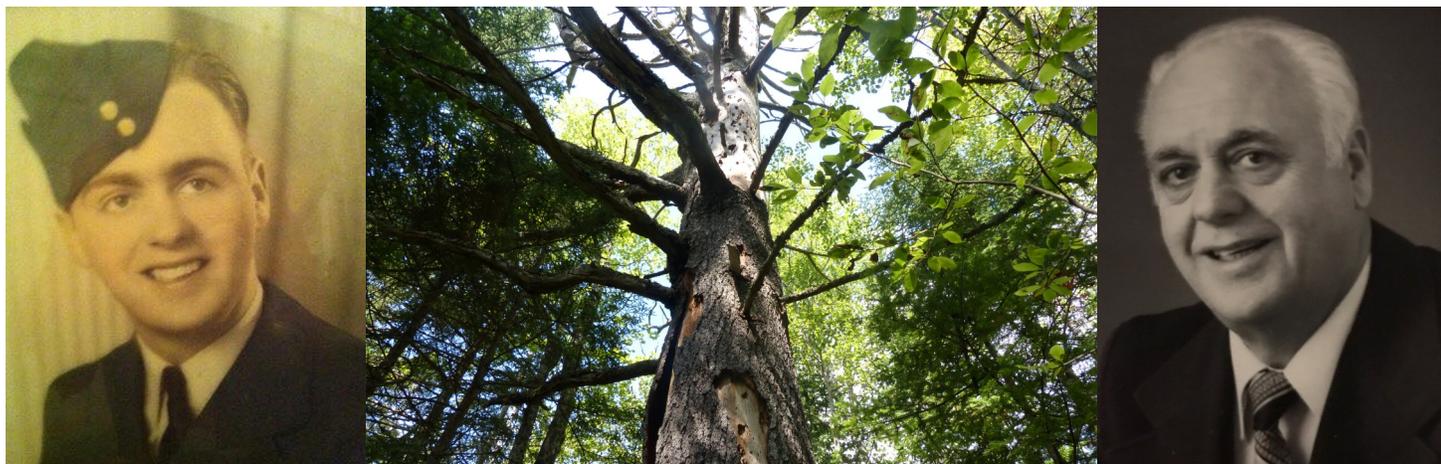


In June, we hosted a forest bird walk in our *Townshend Woodlot Natural Area*. Participants learned more about how to identify forest birds by sight and sound.



In September, INT partnered with the Province to host a volunteer beach cleanup at Nail Pond Beach. Together, we cleaned over 2,000lbs of debris off of the beach!

# Supporter Profile



## Wendell M. Profitt: A Forester's Legacy Reflected in PEI's Protected Spaces

If one were to write a book about the history of parks and other protected lands in Prince Edward Island, the name Wendell Profitt would be liberally sprinkled throughout. When he returned to the Island after service in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II, he took the federal government up on their offer of an education (over the other option of land) and trained as a forest engineer at University of New Brunswick. He graduated with a B.Sc. (F) in 1950.

In his subsequent 33 years working for the Province of PEI, he started the provincial tree nursery with J. Frank Gaudet and wrote the guide "Natives Trees and Shrubs of Prince Edward Island", still used today. As the first Director of Provincial Parks, he oversaw the creation of the provincial parks system and built it up from one park at Strathgartney in 1958 to roughly 30 province-wide by the time of his retirement in 1984. His daughter, Judy Profitt, fondly recalls her many birthday parties at Strathgartney Park, where she and her friends could enjoy the pony rides and an exciting, special summer day out in the country. In the winter, they would return to ski using the one and only ski tow rope on the Island at the time. In those simpler days when travel was less global and more local, family day trips to provincial parks were an important part of the fabric of Island life.

Retirement did not stop Wendell from contributing to the protection of forests and other natural areas in PEI. He was a tremendous friend of Island Nature Trust, always up for a tromp through the forest inventorying plants in new natural areas, and also ready to dig into the less glamorous jobs like serving as volunteer treasurer of the board and fundraising for many years. Staff would always know when Wendell had been into the office; he left candies on everyone's desks as a surprise reward after a long day in the field. Daughter Judy thinks he thought of Island Nature Trust as his second family, and that sentiment was most certainly reciprocated by many of the founding members and staff of the Trust. Wendell was an absolute gem of a gentleman and whole-heartedly dedicated to the progression of parks and protected spaces in PEI. In 2011, he received the Honorable J. Angus MacLean Natural Areas Award in recognition of that dedication.

Sadly, the Island lost this kind soul in 2017 at age 94. While Wendell had other interests and causes in life, including a passion for harness racing and volunteering for his church, forests and parks were his life's work. It was with this in mind that his daughter Judy decided on the first anniversary of his passing to make a financial commitment in his honour to grow Island Nature Trust's fledgling Stewardship Fund for woodland properties. The WENDELL M PROFITT LEGACY FUND was created this year, with an initial contribution by Judy Profitt of \$50,000, to invest in the protected forests of the future in Prince Edward Island. Through this legacy fund, wise and dedicated stewardship of Island forests will continue to benefit from the gentle guidance and support of Wendell Profitt for decades to come. Thank you, friend, once again!

"A man doesn't plant a tree for himself. He plants it for posterity."

- Alexander Smith

# Our Lands

## Bird Island: Isolated But Not Without Challenges

Island Nature Trust protects several nearshore islands; among the largest is *Bird Island Natural Area*. Bird Island is 198 acres and lies in Malpeque Bay, just half a mile east of Lennox Island First Nation. The Mi'kmaq called Malpeque Bay “Maqpa'q”, meaning “a large body of water”. Bird Island was called “Te'pljewe'katik”, which means “Goat Place” (From MCPEI’s Traditional Use Maps). The area is considered sacred by the Mi'kmaq people and was used extensively for traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering.

One quarter of Bird Island is rich woodland while the remaining three quarters is freshwater and saltwater marsh. Approaching the shore, one must pay close attention if travelling by motorboat. Aquaculture leases line the rivers and bay, and the lines keeping the oyster cages and mussel socks in place can easily go unseen, getting tangled in motor blades, potentially damaging both the boat and the lines.

The southwestern point of Bird Island forms a “shingle beach”, which is a beach comprised entirely of pebbles – an uncommon sight on PEI, with its notably sandy shores. Another geological oddity of Bird Island are the glacial erratics that dot the landscape. Glacial erratics are rocks that are unlike the native surrounding rock; they were carried to their location by glacial ice and subsequently left behind when the glacier retreated.



The “shingle beach” that extends into Malpeque Bay on the southwest shore of Bird Island. Photo by Megan Harris.



Glacial erratics on the shore of Bird Island, contrasting with the native red sandstone. Photo by Megan Harris.

In 2017, INT conducted bird surveys in the forested section of Bird Island. We also installed an automated recording unit (ARU) to see if the ARU was as or more effective at quantifying the bird community than we were - a sort of “us against the machine” scenario. Both survey techniques detected a wide array of birds, including: black-and-white warbler, hermit thrush, hairy woodpecker, Cape May warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, and red-eyed vireo.

When we listened to the recordings from Bird Island, we were surprised by the amount of noise we heard. At times it was difficult to hear birds singing over the rumbling of boats passing by. This “noise pollution” can make attracting a mate difficult for male songbirds who rely on the female being able to hear their song.

We often think of nearshore islands as pristine sanctuaries, but human impact is far-reaching and sometimes invisible. While *Bird Island Natural Area* will remain a refuge for wildlife in Malpeque Bay in perpetuity, as the surrounding waters become crowded with more activity, it becomes increasingly challenging to manage human impacts even in these isolated locations.

## INT Staff

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**Vicki Johnston**, Field Technician

**Brett MacKinnon**, Field Technician

## 2019 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.



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

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

The draw will take place at the Annual INT Dinner in April, 2019.

## Partnerships

### American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts: Saving Some Green Through Cross-Border Conservation



Gifting land or part of an inheritance to a conservation group is an incredibly generous act that continues to give back to society in perpetuity. When a family makes the significant decision to give to Island Nature Trust, we want to make the gifting journey positive and smooth sailing. It is heartbreaking at that point to encounter financial obstacles, and sadly that has happened with donors who are Island summer residents but American taxpayers. Up until this year, Island Nature Trust could not recognize this type of donation with any kind of charitable tax receipt because we are not a US-based charity. The concept of paying capital gains tax on a gift of land, either to a land trust or the next generation of the same family, is also foreign to Americans. Gifts are not taxed in this way in the U.S. and it often doesn't even occur to American residents that the system could be that different in Canada. It is!

This July, we got the exciting news that Island Nature Trust had been accepted as a grantee of American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts. This group with the long handle is a land trust and a registered charity based out of the U.S. Because they are also recognized as a prescribed donee by the Canada Revenue Agency, they can hold title on land in Canada and give American taxpayers tax credits they can use. The ultimate goal is to bring title back to a Canadian land trust, a process that may take two or three years. As a grantee, Island Nature Trust can now partner with American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts to make gifting ecologically sensitive land in PEI financially feasible for more U.S. taxpayers. With 3.9 % of the Island currently in American ownership, we hope that many can benefit from this new partnership. Doing great things just got a little easier in PEI thanks to American Friends!

To find out more, visit their website: <https://www.afoclt.org/>

# Volunteer Profile

## Randy Dibblee, Conservationist & Entertainer

Randy Dibblee has been involved with Island Nature Trust in one form or another almost since its inception. Currently, he is rounding out his sixth and final year as representative of Nature PEI as well as board vice-president. For 33 years he has also served as the Master of Ceremonies at the annual Island Nature Trust spring fund-raising dinner.

Randy was born and raised in Saint John, NB, and first came to PEI to attend St. Dunstan's University. Two science degrees later, he began a 42-year career (wow!) as a wildlife biologist with the PEI government in the Fish and Wildlife Division. Now retired, his colleagues will tell you that he was a manager that loved to be out in the field. One of his great causes then and now was the retention of wetlands in the PEI landscape. He was instrumental in mapping and classifying wetlands across the province, and in helping to develop the legislation that protects them today.

As wildlife biologist for the Province and as an avid angler and cross-country skier, Randy has traversed many of the backwoods across the Island. That regional knowledge has been invaluable in our land management and land acquisition decision-making.



Randy, as the Master of Ceremonies, at our Night for Nature event in 2014



Randy, before retirement, enjoying doing field work as a wildlife biologist with the PEI government in the Fish and Wildlife Division.

Friends and colleagues also know Randy is a long-time folksinger, going back to his university days when he was a member of the group "Sons of Erin". Any over-night road trip wasn't complete without the guitar coming along for the ride! Now Randy lists his favourite place in PEI as his deck in the summer, listening to eastern wood peewee calling in his woods nearby. Relax and enjoy Randy! You will be sorely missed by the board and staff, who hope we will still see you frequently in the office and at celebration of land events.

We are so grateful for all of your support over the years, Randy.  
Thank-you so much!

# Forest Bird Conservation is For Everyone

Contributed by Julie-Lynn Zahavich

PEI is known for its beaches, red sandstone cliffs, and abundance of fresh food - not necessarily its forests. We don't have the towering Douglas fir of British Columbia or the vastness of the northern boreal. Our forests are small and generally in a degraded condition; however, there are some small parcels that provide glimpses of what our forests used to look like.

We are in the Acadian forest region. The Mi'kmaq named the forest here "Wapane'kati" which means "Land of the Dawn" or "Land of First Light". Visit a rich woodland at sunrise, and you will come to understand this name; dawn is when our forests come alive – dew droplets hang like diamonds on needles and leaves, there is an anticipation of the warmth the sun will bring, and birdsong fills the air.

Our staff have been conducting early morning bird surveys over the last two summers in INT natural areas and provincially-owned properties across PEI. We are learning more about our forest bird communities and species at risk, and connecting with private woodlot owners who want to help protect and enhance bird habitat. Recognizing that most of the species who nest in our forests are insect-eating, long-distance migrants, we are also trying to promote mindfulness amongst our community of how our consumer choices and everyday behaviours impact birds. How can you help? Find out below.



From top left, clockwise: black-and-white warbler, Canada warbler, ovenbird, and olive-sided flycatcher Photos by Brett MacKinnon.

Land Owners & Land Managers	Members of the public
Limit forest management activities during critical periods (May–August) when forest birds are nesting and rearing young. Forest management activities (e.g. cutting, clearing, thinning, etc.) can directly impact forest birds by destroying nests and individuals, or causing nest abandonment.	Support environmentally conscious companies, for instance, shade-grown coffee and chocolate producers. These products come from South America, where many of our migratory birds spend their winter. By supporting sustainable companies, you can help to protect important wintering habitat for many forest bird species.
Leave understory shrubs intact. Shrubs provide cover for nest sites and protection from predators. A healthy and diverse shrub layer also provides excellent foraging habitat for forest birds and helps to retain soil moisture in summer.	Make your windows visible to birds! Although we can see windows just fine, our feathered friends cannot. Placing decals on windows and screen doors will help to ensure no birds collide with them.
Leave dead standing trees (i.e. snags). Snags provide habitat for many insect and bird species. Several bird species nest exclusively in snags. Many species of songbirds use snags as perches to sing from.	Keep pets on-leash in natural areas. Many bird species nest on or near the ground, meaning their eggs and young are incredibly vulnerable to trampling and disturbance.
Maintain buffer zones, preferably wider than the legislated 15 m, along rivers, streams and ponds. These areas are hotspots for bird diversity. Since many insect species begin their lives in freshwater, buffer zones will also help to protect insects, a critical staple in many forest birds' diets.	Keep cats indoors or construct an outdoor enclosure for them to use. We all love our furry friends, but every year cats kill millions of songbirds. Keeping cats indoors or on-leash will keep them and birds safe!
Find alternatives to toxic pesticides and insecticides.	Participate in citizen science! Sign up for EBird online and submit your bird sightings.

Island Nature Trust's Forest Bird Program received funding from:



# Notes & News

## The Youth Bennett: Another Value Added to the Classic Fall Birding Event

The Bennett Birding Classic is entering its 24<sup>th</sup> year as the premiere fall birding event in PEI. It has always served two fundamental purposes of generating data on long-term trends in Island bird communities during the key period of fall migration, while also generating funds for Island Nature Trust in the form of pledges and event donations. This year, for the third year, it is serving a third important purpose of youth engagement.

Unplugging youth from our increasingly technology-driven world can be a struggle. There is a global education movement of forest schools now trying to address that challenge, as well as many local initiatives like Macphail Woods' fabulous summer camps.

Island Nature Trust has focused their education efforts in recent years on immersive events that engage all of the senses in learning and experiencing nature. The Youth Bennett is an opportunity for young people to get hooked on birding in a way that:

- Is collaborative, since the group acts like a team and several individuals need to see a species in order for it to count
- Is inclusive, with INT providing the equipment for those who don't have their own and the expert knowledge for "virgin birders" young and old
- Is relaxed and informal, releasing youth from the pressure of having to be completely tuned in and "performing"
- Is low-tech and natural, outdoors in the fall when the bugs are few and the sun is pretty reliable

If you have young people plugged in at home or have friends who do, try turning off the breaker and herding them to Robinson's Island on Saturday, Sep 29<sup>th</sup>! See below for details.



The 2017 Youth Bennett team, "The Rocket Birds", poses for a group photo after spotting 18 different bird species!

## Upcoming Nature Events

**Sept 26<sup>th</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. Megan Jones titled "Wildlife Health in Prince Edward Island: Past, Present, and Future". Meeting starts at 7:00 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

**Sept 29<sup>th</sup> — 24<sup>th</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 29<sup>th</sup>— 3<sup>rd</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 Trail Head at 11:00AM. Parents welcome! Birders under 5 years old must be accompanied by a parent. Participation by donation.

**Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>— Nature PEI Meeting—This one's for the birds: How we can help conserve bird populations on PEI** — Brendan Kelly, Bird Conservationist and INT Forest Bird Technician, 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 27<sup>th</sup>—INT Event—Peters Road Walk and Talk** — Join us for a walk and talk along the scenic Peters Road, located just west of Charlottetown before Strathgartney Park. We will visit a pioneer cemetery, discuss the history of the area, then walk to our *Malcolm McArthur 1899 Natural Area*, doing a roadside cleanup as we go. Event is from 1-4 pm. Meet at the south end of Peters Road off the Trans Canada Highway in Churchill, PE. Admission is by donation.

**Nov 6<sup>th</sup>— Nature PEI Meeting —Island at the Center of the World. The Geological Heritage of PEI** - Dr. John Calder will discuss his new book: "Island at the Center of the World. The Geological Heritage of PEI". He will also be signing books so bring your copy! Meeting starts at 7:30 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

**Dec 4<sup>th</sup> — Nature PEI Meeting—Orchids of PEI** — Colin Chapman, botanist and lichenologist with the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Center 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, Randy Dibblee and Donna Gill. Randy and Donna both served 6 years on the INT Board. Randy sat on the Land Management Committee and also served as Vice-President for the last 3 years. Donna sat on the Fundraising, Land Acquisition, and Awards Committees and served as Secretary. Thank you both for your contributions to INT!

### Executive:

Judi Allen	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  
 June Sanderson  
 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!

**Stay tuned to the INT Facebook page for dates of Phillips Agri Services' annual Fall Bird Seed Sale!** Phillips Agri Services is open on weekdays from 8am to 5pm, or on Saturdays from 8 to 12pm!