



ISLAND
NATURE
TRUST

JUNE 2021
#152

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

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Quarterly

INNT

NEW LANDS:

Forest Hill

Hansen-MacIsaac Natural Area

136 hectare (337 acre) property in Forest Hill contributes to a sizeable unfragmented block of rich lowland forest in PEI and is home to CO₂ absorbing fen peatland – a natural combatant against global warming



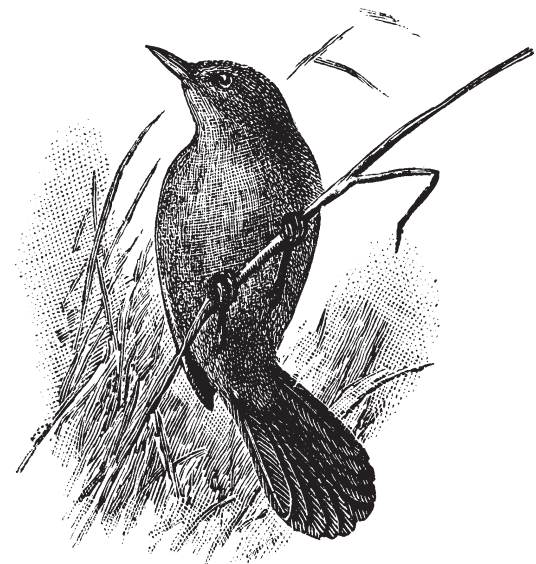
Ponds like this on the property provide habitat for a diverse range of wildlife, such as amphibians and small mammals.

Forest Hill is an ecological treasure trove, providing benefits to both Islanders and wildlife. Defined by the presence of lowland forest, fen peatland and riparian habitats in the St. Peters River watershed it is a relatively untouched area of eastern Prince Edward Island. The Hansen – MacIsaac Natural Area, is the single largest land parcel secured by the Trust in its forty-one-year history – notable for its intact and contiguous lowland forest blocks, which are rare for PEI. Recognized as a Priority Place for biodiversity and species-at-risk in PEI, the forested wetland is home to migratory songbirds, such as the Ruby-crowned kinglet and palm warbler. Three species of frog (wood frog, northern leopard frog and spring peeper), beaver lodges, muskrat dens, coyote scat, and ruffed grouse have all been observed at the site.

“Contiguous forests are important in minimizing some of the long-term risks to ecological integrity from threats like windthrow in high intensity storms, extended drought and invasive plant infestations. There are also many forest songbirds that require large blocks of intact habitat for nesting and foraging. It is so critically important for people and wildlife that we retain and protect these last remaining large natural landscapes.”

Megan Harris, Director of Conservation

The peatlands that constitute nearly a half of the 337-acre property serve the Island community through continued carbon sequestration, groundwater and coldwater springs protection. Although they only occupy 3% of the global land area, peatlands contain about 25% of global soil carbon — twice as much as the world's forests. Acting as a natural carbon sink, they absorb 150 to 250 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere each year worldwide. In a province that has experienced a loss of almost 1,200 acres of peatland due to mining, protecting this vital ecosystem service area in perpetuity will mitigate the effects of climate change and directly benefit Islanders for generations to come (see page 5: *What does peatland do for us?*).



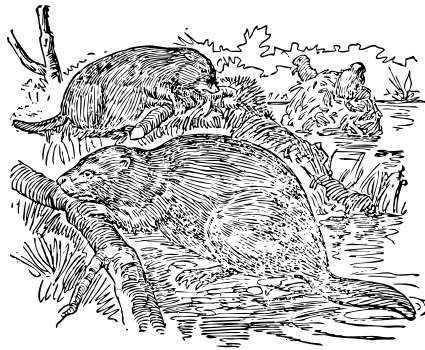
Recognized for its high ecological value by Environment & Climate Change Canada, the parcel, located several kilometers to the Southeast of St Peter's Bay, will now be protected forever thanks to an Ecological Gift donation from Carl Hansen and Dan MacIsaac.

"Our experience with Island Nature Trust and the process of donating through the Ecological Gift program was seamless. From the start, Trust staff put us in the right direction and carried out all the work for the application. There was very little effort expected on our part. Also, we appreciate that Island Nature Trust agreed to provide access to horse riders and extend the existing trail to allow for Islanders to appreciate nature on the land."

Carl Hansen, Land Donor



Carl Hansen, left, and Dan MacIsaac purchased the parcel of land 20 years ago and donated it to Island Nature Trust as an Ecological Gift.



The riparian zone on the property is a natural water filter – an ecosystem service that provides clean water flowing into St Peter's River.

Forest Hill has added ecological value because of its connectivity to other protected lands. Near to Greenwich, PEI National Park, it is also bounded to the south by the Forest Hill Natural Area and to the north by the River Wetlands Wildlife Management Area, both owned by the Province. To the north lies a property within the St. Peters River watershed that INT is in the process of securing as another Ecological Gift. Forest Hill's proximity to protected natural spaces provides an important linkage in allowing dynamic ecosystems and ecological services to flourish.

To the south, the provincial Forest Hill Natural Area supports walking and horse-riding trails that help Islanders connect to their environmental heritage in an immersive way. INT will honour the donors' wishes to see a loop trail addition to this network using the existing woods road that enters and exits onto MacSwain Rd. The woods road follows the highest elevations on the property where Islanders can experience the natural beauty of the forest without impacting on the natural spaces.

INTERESTED IN DONATING OR SELLING LAND?

You have many options and the result is of great benefit to both you and the wildlife you could help to protect. Learn more at; islandnaturetrust.ca/conserving-land

Let's have a chat! Contact our Director of Conservation, Megan Harris at; conserve@islandnaturetrust.ca or call 902-566-9150

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

By Janell Smith



What are ecosystem services and why are they important?

Ecosystem services are the benefits that nature provides to humans and are often categorized into provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural. You may be most familiar with provisioning ecosystem services - including food from forests, fields, and oceans; lumber for timber and firewood; drinking water; and even natural gas and oil. Other provisioning services include plants for clothing and materials, as well as natural medicines.



Regulating services provided by natural ecosystems include climate regulation, pollination, purification of water, erosion control, flood control, and carbon storage. Supporting services include the processes that often go unseen but are fundamental to human health, such as soil formation, nutrient cycling, and water cycling. Cultural services are the non-material benefits provided by nature through spiritual enrichment, inspiration, recreation, and aesthetic value (as you can see, ecosystem services are vital to our everyday lives!). As with all life, the categories of ecosystem services are interconnected. For example, fruit trees (provisioning service) rely on the soil (supporting service) and pollination (regulating service) to thrive.

What is payment for ecosystem services?

Historically, most ecosystem services have not been monetized, except for some provisioning services that have a market value (e.g. timber, food). To recognize the significant benefits of ecosystem services and the true cost of losing them, there has been a move to place an economic value on them. Some ecosystem services are easier to value than others, with cultural and supporting services being more difficult or impossible (e.g. how do you value a sense of place or inspiration), leading some researchers to suggest that they be valued in noneconomic terms. This recognizes that a benefit exists, but does not provide a dollar value. There are a variety of tools and techniques used to value ecosystem services. One technique is to use replacement cost. For example, if a wetland that provided water storage and purification to a nearby community was at risk of being developed, the value of this wetland from a replacement cost perspective would be the cost to construct infrastructure to replace the services provided by the wetland. While this may seem too simplified and not recognize many of the inherent ecological benefits of the wetland, in our current economic paradigm it can provide useful information to make more sustainable decisions. If the cost to replace these services is too high, the development may not proceed; while if ecosystem services are not valued at all, it is very likely that the development would proceed regardless of the impacts of ecological degradation.

Payment for ecosystem services (PES) are initiatives where the owners of natural assets are compensated for the provision of ecosystem services. Often, the supplier of ecosystem services is the landowner, while the buyer could be governments, corporations, and/or individuals. Examples include:

- The government may pay landowners for the provision of an ecosystem service, with the intent that the landowner will allow the land to continue to provide the public good. For example, in PEI, through the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program, agricultural producers are paid by the Province of PEI to delay haying until after July 15th to allow grassland birds to fledge their young.
- Corporations may be interested in paying for ecosystem services for corporate social responsibility initiatives, or even to promote the success of their business. For example, in France, a bottled water company paid upstream farmers to use different agricultural practices to reduce nitrates in their bottled water.
- Individuals may buy carbon offsets to reduce the impact of their travel. Depending on who they buy offsets from, they can support forest owners using sustainable management practices.

What's the difference between natural capital/natural assets, and ecosystem services?

Natural capital or natural assets are the natural resources (soil, air, water, living things) in an area, while ecosystem services are the benefits that flow to humans from natural capital/natural assets. I used to struggle with the idea of monetizing natural assets. How can you put a price on living organisms and systems? It took a shift in my mindset to recognize the benefit of valuation. We live in a world where the dominant worldview is based on the economy. While we cannot truly value ecosystem services, developing a proxy can help us to recognize that nature is very valuable and should be incorporated into our decision making. Unfortunately, without this value, nature is often ignored or placed last in decision making.

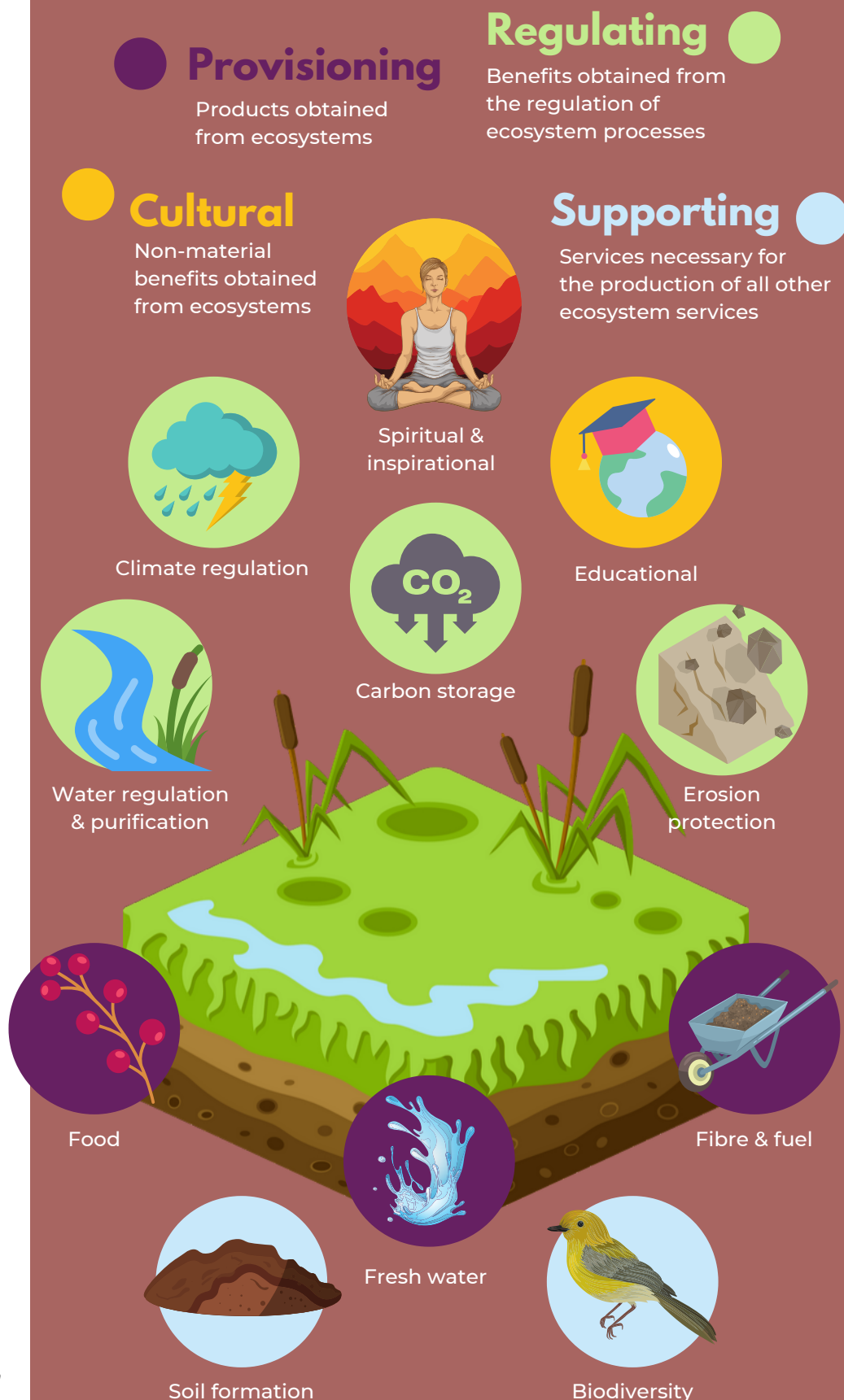
I recently watched a presentation by Michelle Molnar of Municipal Natural Assets Initiative that really resonated with me. She said there is a difference between valuing nature (which is invaluable) and valuing the services that nature provides (not nature itself). Michelle used a metaphor of people and their jobs. Valuing these ecosystem services is like valuing the skillset of people. It is valuing the work they do, not placing value on a human life. Similarly, valuing ecosystem services is valuing the work of nature, not nature itself.



by Janell Smith
Finance Officer

WHAT DOES PEATLAND DO FOR US?

Including the newly acquired Hansen-MacIsaac Natural Area, Island Nature Trust owns and protects over 12 natural areas containing peatland ecosystem services.



DONOR PROFILE: PHILLIPS FEED



Island Nature Trust is enormously grateful for the long-term partnership with Phillips Agri Services. What started as selling bags of bird seed on the back of a truck has evolved to become an all-year round fundraising alliance.

Over the last twenty-five years of collaboration, Phillips Agri Services has donated an incredible \$80,560.15.

We talk to owner John Scales and long-serving staff member Pat Malone about the mutually beneficial relationship serving their customers and our supporters alike.



Pictured is John Scales, Owner of Phillips Agri Services, which has been in business for over 50 years. They are well known in the PEI agricultural community for their high quality products, services and knowledgeable staff.



When and why did your partnership with Island Nature Trust begin?

PM: "We used to provide a truck to Island Nature Trust, loaded with small bags of bird seed that the Trust purchased to sell to bird lovers at the farmers market back in the 90's when Jackie Waddell was Executive Director."

The collaboration allowed INT to sell seed while providing helpful information and advice on feeding wild birds in their gardens.


PM: "Unfortunately, it was not particularly cost effective for the Trust, so we came up with a new idea: Beginning In the late 90's we started giving the Trust a portion of the proceeds on bags sold at our store during our yearly bird seed sale. The project grew in popularity with demand for seed rising quickly. Throughout the year, customers were specifically asking to buy seed that helped the Trust, so we swiftly decided to offer proceeds on all bags sold."

Phillips Feed has generously donated to the Trust for nearly three decades now. Why is it important for you to sponsor Island Nature Trust on a continued basis?

JS: "There are two ways to look at it. Most of our customers are aligned to the purpose and mandate of the Trust. At the same time, we believe in and stand behind the vision of the Trust and the good things that they are doing. We feel that the partnership is a natural fit."

And we support each other. Every year the Trust will provide an expert in bird wildlife to join us for our sale season, acting as a helpful resource for our customers who have questions."

PM: "Yes! During the sale, staff are so busy that it is enormously helpful to have a representative from the Trust to act as knowledge base for our customers – it's a beneficial relationship for all parties".



Black Oil Sunflower seed is the seed of choice for the majority of birds on PEI.

A portion of funds from every variety of bird seed sale is donated to Island Nature Trust



Have you seen support for Phillips's feed grow during the partnership with INT?

PM: "Absolutely. Once people found out that proceeds on every bird seed purchase goes to the Trust, they started buying here rather than elsewhere. Demand for seed is high because of this partnership, which means seed is fresh and is better for the birds. Birds are just not happy with stale seed in their bellies! Also, our customers appreciate the variety of bird feeders that we now provide. Often people have specific requirements of the type of product they need for their bird friends."

JS: "Our customers are comforted in knowing that we have two sales per year – in the winter and fall – where they can buy seed at a discount. It is because of the alliance with the Trust that we are able to do this on a consistent and sustained basis."

Phillips Agri Services have nurtured a valuable partnership with Island Nature Trust that benefits its customers and the Trust's supporters. Their own knowledgeable staff promote a culture of learning by providing advice to customers on the topic of feeding wild birds - encouraging people to ask questions.



PM: "Customers often share photos, and interesting stories about birds they have seen feeding using our feeders in their gardens. We get a lot of young people who are interested in feeding and learning more about birds. Now it seems to be a hobby that is not anchored to age or gender. Maybe once it used to be considered a senior citizens hobby but now there's a lot of twenty-year-olds coming here to buy seed."



I have one customer who comes in regularly to buy seed. Once she told me that it is not she who feeds the birds at their home but her two young children. They actively share their observations and photographs on social media."



WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A CORPORATE SPONSOR?

INT is excited to build and nurture strong relationships with ecologically minded local businesses or organizations. Let us help you grow by allowing us to grow!

To express an interest, contact our Finance Officer, Janell Smith at; finance@islandnaturetrust.ca or call 902-566-9150

STEWARDSHIP IN REVIEW



RESTORATION MAY/JUNE 2021

May is the optimal month for INT to get hands-on with much needed restoration projects in our natural areas. Staff and volunteers have been hard at work planting native trees and shrubs that will grow to become natural buffers of protection for the Island coast and its wildlife.

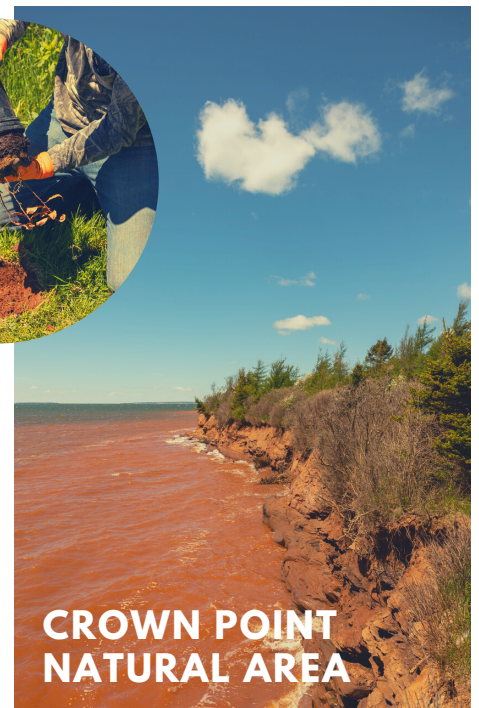
INT prioritizes planting sites based on the unique needs of each natural area – whether there's a grassy coastal cliff that could use some stabilization, a former agricultural field with poor soil health, or illegal cutting, mowing, or driving. This is all part of an effort to restore and enhance our natural spaces.

This spring, INT planted at six Natural Areas across PEI, from Tryon to Fortune Bridge: Crown Point – Wji'kijek, Penny's Point, Neuffer, Jenkins Complex,

6 Natural Areas:
New tree plantings this year

Hon. Lloyd G. MacPhail, and Barbara Green. In total, 880 native tree and shrub species were planted. These include coastal shrubs such as bayberry, wild rose, and chokeberry to stabilize the soil of our sensitive island shorelines and reduce erosion. To add biological diversity and habitat complexity to the forested natural areas, native hardwood and softwood trees are planted. In addition, flowering shrubs such as witch hazel, bush honeysuckle, common elder, and red elderberry are planted to provide habitat and food sources for pollinators.

In addition to our usual means of acquiring native plants - including purchases



from the Macphail Woods Nursery or participating in the provincial Greening Spaces Program - this year we also had several generous plant donations. Maritime Electric donated 15 lovely red maple saplings to us, and Nancy, one of our Conservation Guardians, donated a number of red oak, yellow birch, and red maple seedlings.



ANTHONY

CONSERVATION GUARDIAN FOR CROWN POINT

Our Land Stewardship team is mighty but small and this planting work wouldn't be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers. For many of these planting sites, we relied on our Conservation Guardians, along with many volunteers from the public to get the planting done.

Anthony Vriends became a Conservation Guardian for Crown Point Natural Area a little over a year ago. Shortly after the headland was acquired by Island Nature Trust, he learned about the Guardian program during a community event that the Trust attended. Anthony jumped at the opportunity to help the Trust's tree planting-restoration efforts at Crown Point :

"I have always loved walking around the headland while enjoying the nature the area has to offer. I figured I needed to do something to help protect and preserve this beautiful environment".

880

native tree
& shrubs
planted



The goal in caring for our natural areas in the long-term is to think strategically and plan for the future. The trees that we plant today will remain here long after our current generation. INT envisions what these sites will look like in 10, 50, and even 100 years. Eventually, restoration sites will develop into diverse and healthy forests and ecosystems.

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**ARE YOU INTERESTED
IN BECOMING A
CONSERVATION
GUARDIAN?**

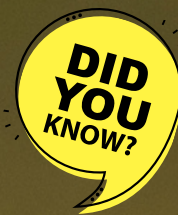
INT protects and stewards over sixty natural areas across PEI. Learn more about volunteer opportunities and our mission to create corridors of wildlife connectivity across the Island islandnaturetrust.ca/conserving-land

To express an interest, please contact Land Stewardship Coordinator, Amy Frost-Wicks at land@islandnaturetrust.ca or call 902-566-9150

SPECIES-AT-RISK: PIPING PLOVER



Contrary to popular belief, Piping Plovers are open beach nesters and do not nest in the dunes.



In northwestern PEI, the Sandhills have already proven to be an essential set of beaches for the piping plover again this year. Out of the 5 islands, 4 are hosting a total of 6 nests and approximately 17 adult birds!

The plover census began on June 1st and wrapped up on the 9th. As of now 28 adults have arrived at provincial beaches outside of the national park. Other exciting news; our first chicks (a full clutch!) were hatched on the 7th.

ATV tracks have been observed within 1ft of a nest on one of these islands. A reminder to ATV users that a permit is required to travel on a beach with permission and stay off the dry sand - sticking to areas below the high tide mark. Even experienced birders find it hard to spot plover nests, which means trying to avoid nests on a moving vehicle is next to impossible.



Males make scrapes (nests) by spinning around and digging circles in the sand - pirouetting like a ballet dancer.

Males take bits of shell and throw them over their shoulder into the nest to disguise it. We call it "decorating for the female"



Piping Plover is a precocial species meaning they are hatched with the eyes open, a covering of down or hair, and can walk almost immediately!

A nest does not begin incubation until a full clutch of four eggs is laid. This means chicks all hatch at the same time.



Tattooing – males like to show off and display an upright stance to attract a mate.



Calcium deposits that form on the end of a chick's beak help them use it like a hammer to bash out of the egg.

After chicks hatch, parents fly over the sea discarding shells to avoid predation at the nest.



Tapdancers - Piping Plovers often tap the ground to entice invertebrate food to the surface.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A BEACH GUARDIAN?

This is a volunteer opportunity like no other. It is quite literally "a walk on the beach". Here's a chance to connect with nature, all the while playing a crucial role in the conservation of species at risk.

Learn more by contacting Piping Plover Coordinator, Vicki Johnson at plover@islandnaturetrust.ca or call 902-566-9150

FUNDRAISING: 'LET'S PROTECT OUR ISLAND'

Island Nature Trust would like to extend a huge thank-you to everyone who purchased participating alcoholic beverages from liquor stores across PEI this spring.

After a one-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 'Let's Protect Our Island' collaboration between Island Nature Trust and the PEI Liquor Control Commission has now concluded its fifth year with close to \$20,000 being raised for the Trust.

The pandemic has restricted Islanders' access to the rest of the world but reintroduced us to the beauty in the landscape just outside our doors. Collectively, we have recognized the tremendous benefits that interacting with natural spaces have on our physical and mental health. With funds raised from the partnership with LCC, INT will invest in those lands that have kept us grounded in one of the hardest years many of us have experienced.



Island Nature Trust is committed to investing in the future of Islanders by working to protect natural landscapes in PEI. Since 2016, funds from the initiative have helped Island Nature Trust protect over 1,600 acres of forest, wetlands and coast in PEI.

The commitment doesn't end when Island Nature Trust acquires the land but continues in the form of wise and active stewardship of those protected natural spaces.

We and our children directly benefit from the ecological services these natural areas provide with clean water, clean air and an environment resilient to climate change.

As our property portfolio increases so do our costs for

responsible land management, public trails stewardship, effective communication with Island communities and education and collaboration with user groups.

"The money raised from this five-year commitment from LCC has, and will go, a long way to protecting natural spaces for generations of people and wildlife to enjoy. Thank you to everyone who participated in this wonderful campaign. It's truly appreciated."

**Bianca McGregor,
Executive Director**

YOUNG NATURALISTS

Welcome to the Young Naturalists page.

Learn about an Island species every newsletter, solve puzzles and express your creative side!

Feel free to share your achievements on social media but don't forget to tag us @Island Nature Trust and use the hashtag;

#givingbacktonature

BOBOLINK

Dolichonyx oryzivorus



DID YOU KNOW?

Breeding male Bobolinks are mostly black with a white back and rump, and a rich buffy nape. Females and nonbreeding males are warm buffy brown, streaked with dark brown on the back and flanks. They have bold brown stripes on the crown but are unstreaked on the nape of the neck. The bill is black.

Bobolink nest in hay fields to raise their young. Modern practices of cutting hay early for sweeter forage and silage eliminates whole fields as nesting habitat, because the young do not have enough time to fledge before the field is cut and cannot get out of the way of the harvesting equipment.

The bobolink is a grassland species, feeding on insects as well as rice and grains. It is classed as threatened with a Canadian population decrease by 88% over the last 40 years.

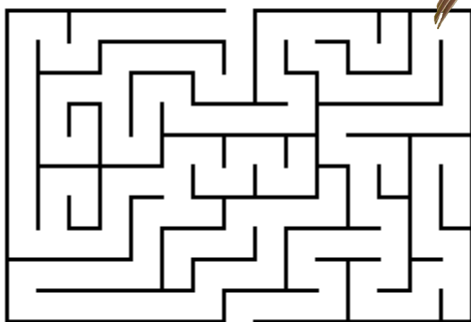
WORD SEARCH

Y A I B O B O L I N K Y H S M
I C U I G Z W G J E O P N F P
W N L J F R U B P V A L A I R
U T S H U I A F D W E P D E O
Z F P E G D N S Z B G X A L T
D Z U Q C M S K S V U V M D E
F L V Q C T F Y P L G L J V C
A Y N B B Q I L J W A I P D T
R Z Q B L L I V E R P N B I E
M H X B Q H V D O D O B D W D
F A Q L I N T P K R G P S R D
R Y T W I R F B W D E E X L O
T H R E A T E N E D E W L Q R
Y Q N X Y I H J V X R M P Y T
P A U S W H E A G S U V S Q T

Hay
Field
Threatened
Insectivore
Farm
Grassland
Yellow
Black
Fledge
Bobolink



FEMALE BOBOLINK



HELP THE BOBOLINK GET TO ITS GROUND NEST



MALE BOBOLINK

COLOR ME IN!

NEWS



Tuning into Nature is returning in late September after a wildly successful first year.

Appreciate the blending of music with nature through a wonderfully immersive experience in Indian River.

Priority booking for members with details for the public following on social media. Stay tuned!

QUINCE: RED ISLAND CIDER PROMO BACK FOR ANOTHER SEASON



\$20 a bottle
\$5 to INT

Buy a bottle, enjoy a glass in person or fill a growler while supplies last. Launching end of June 2021

WELCOMING THIS YEARS' SEASONAL FIELD STAFF:

Species-At-Risk Technicians



Ryan
Cheverie



Jason
Ryan

Land Stewardship Technicians



Lyndsay
MacWilliams

Anthony
Atkinson



Brittany
MacLean

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please take a moment to fill out the form below and return it to the address above with your membership fee. You can also renew and pay easily online at: www.islandnaturetrust.ca Thank you for your support!

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Category:

Student (\$10) ☐ Single (\$20) ☐ Family (\$25) ☐ Life (\$500) ☐ Donation \$: _____

(Tax receipts will be issued for all donations)

Payment Method: Cheque ☐ Money Order ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____

OUR STAFF



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WHO ARE WE...?

Island Nature Trust is a non-profit, membership-driven, private registered charity dedicated to permanent protection of natural areas in 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.

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**NEW
OFFICE**



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INT