



ISLAND
NATURE
TRUST

QUARTERLY

FEBRUARY 2026 #166

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <u>Message From Our Executive Director</u> | 02 |
| <u>Bovyer Creek Natural Area</u> | 03 |
| <u>History of the Bovyer Land</u> | 05 |
| <u>Protecting Eastern Kings Hardwood</u> | 07 |
| <u>Donation Spotlight</u> | 08 |
| <u>Give a Hoot Campaign Update</u> | 08 |
| <u>Wildlife Conservation Fund</u> | 09 |
| <u>Nature Canada's NatureHood Program</u> | 09 |
| <u>RBC Foundation Project</u> | 11 |
| <u>Freshwater Protection Project</u> | 12 |
| <u>Citizen Science: iNaturalist Summary</u> | 13 |

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Greetings,

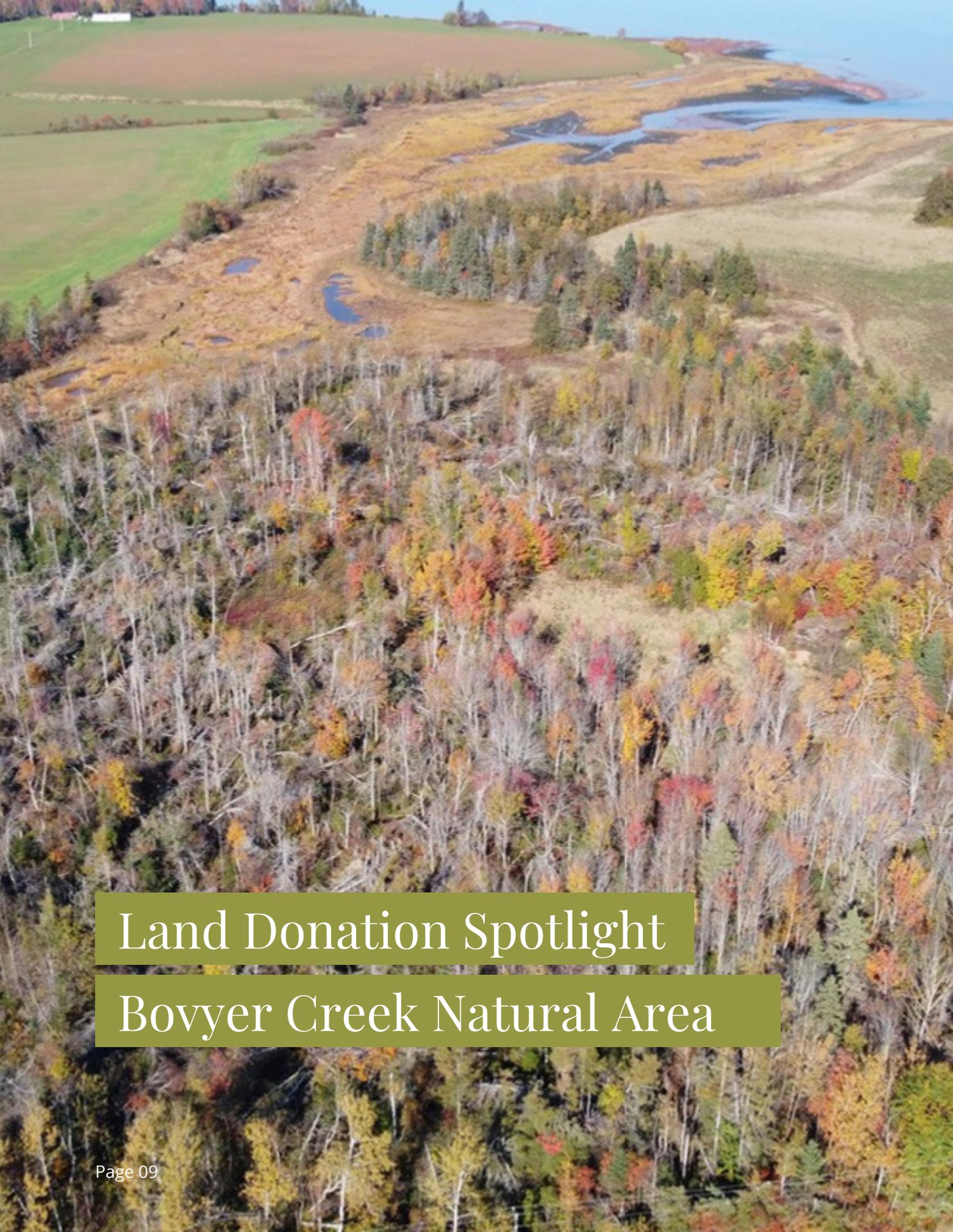
Nature rarely asks us to arrive with answers. Instead, it invites us into rhythm, into repeated gestures of walking familiar paths, noticing small shifts in light, and returning again and again through the seasons. These rituals, rather than tidy resolutions, are where regeneration begins. When we step outside, we remember that renewal is not rushed; it unfolds quietly through attention, care, and time.

In this issue of Island Nature Trust Quarterly, we explore how these acts of presence shape both land and community. You will read about land donation and protection efforts in Bunbury, where long-term stewardship ensures that nature's cycles can continue uninterrupted. We share an update on our new NatureHood project, focused on strengthening everyday connections between people and nearby green spaces. You will also meet one of our dedicated volunteers whose story highlights the power of citizen science, proof that meaningful conservation begins with curiosity and commitment.

We are also pleased to introduce a new initiative made possible through the generous support of RBC Foundation, which has selected Island Nature Trust as a recipient of one of their Community Investments. This two-year project will focus on best management practices that support carbon sequestration, the provisioning of ecosystem services, and the enhancement of wildlife habitat. Through the creation and monitoring of a network of demonstration plots, we will illustrate how different silvicultural techniques shape forest health and resilience, offering insights grounded in observation and care rather than quick fixes.



Melissa Cameron
Executive Director



Land Donation Spotlight

Bovyer Creek Natural Area

Located on the Fullerton Inlet in Bunbury, the Boyer Creek Natural Area is 28 acres of forest, saltwater marsh, and retired organic agricultural fields. The property features over 150 meters of frontage along the Hillsborough River, also known as Elsitkuk, which is PEI's largest river system and holds deep cultural, ecological, and historical importance.

The western boundary follows the natural meander of Boyer Creek, where fresh and saltwater marshes provide critical habitat for a wide range of plant and wildlife species. To the south, a multi-aged mixedwood forest containing white spruce, red maple, trembling aspen, and tamarack contributes to climate resilience and biodiversity.



-  Property Boundary
-  Ducks Unlimited Managed Protected Lands
-  Waterways

In addition to its ecological richness, the Boyer land also has a rich historical background, which includes being host to a fox farm, shingle mill and dam, tree nursery, and a section of the decommissioned PEI Railway.



Mixedwood forest within the Boyer Creek Natural Area

At the end of November 2025, INT staff established a small open-air nursery by planting seeds from ten native species. The nursery's goal is to build a cache of locally grown trees and shrubs that can be used to enhance biodiversity across INT's Natural Areas, including this property.

In the coming years, INT will also work to improve and expand the buffer zones along the Hillsborough River and Boyer Creek.



INT staff survey an open area dominated by fireweed.

Thank you to the Boyer descendants for their generous gift of land and their long standing stewardship of the property.

The Boyer Creek Natural Area was primarily donated and partially purchased with funding from the Government of Prince Edward Island.

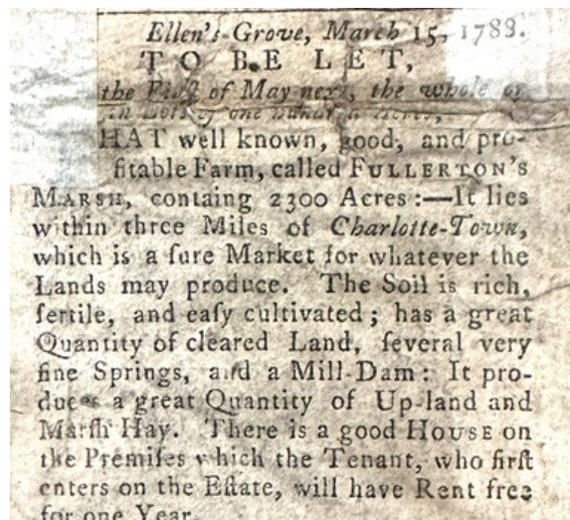
History of the Bovyer Land

Between the end of the French period in 1763 and 1816, when my ancestor John Bovyer purchased 895 acres in what is now Bunbury and Stratford, the property had changed hands six times. Half of Lot 48 had been seized by the Crown from the estate of the proprietor and was auctioned off in 1780. This was a rare opportunity for a local person to actually own land and escape the chronic problems of land tenancy in 19th-century Prince Edward Island.

Little is known for sure about the natural history of the property along what was then called Mill Creek. During the French period, land was usually cultivated along rivers and around bays. One description survives relating to the property when John's son Stephen took over:

"The farm was originally very poor quality, much of it being blueberry and laurel barren...and covered with spruce and juniper trees"

This earlier ad leasing the land in 1788 was much more positive.



Whatever the situation, much of the recorded history relates to a bountiful farming operation over many generations. Also evident in the Bovyer/Jones history are progressive values and civic engagement:

- PEI's first female doctor in the 1880s;
- A justice of the peace;
- The first PEI patent;
- A church deacon;
- A minister of agriculture;
- A deputy minister of agriculture;
- A premier

I believe these people would be happy that part of their property will be a protected natural area. Many thanks to the staff at Island Nature Trust for supporting this and for their dedication.



I can't be sure, but I believe the wooded part of the protected area has never been cultivated. It is certainly mature woodland in a 1926 photo. Also, for many years, the forest was part of the property west of the creek and may have been orphaned from the plow.

There is evidence that Stephen and his son, Franklin Boyer, had established a tree nursery somewhere on the farm property around 1880. My grandfather, Walter Jones, who assumed farm management with his father-in-law around 1914, notes in a letter, suggesting a farm visit for classes in the Summer School of Science.



Bunbury Black Fox Co. ranch that was located in the southern section of the now Natural Area (1941).

"There are foxes and Karakul sheep and a nursery of forest trees and the orchard and strawberries"

In a 1915 letter to the experimental farm, he (Walter Jones) offered to sell several dozen 6-foot-tall Norway maples, "raised from PEI seed", and golden willows, for 50 cents each. The reply says that they would prefer sugar maples!

I don't know how long this enterprise continued, but clearly there was great interest in the value of trees on farmland. And to give him credit, the Forestry Division of the Dept of Industry and Natural Resources was established in 1951 when he was Premier!

He would be pleased to know that there will again be a tree nursery on the Farm.

Joyce Dewar

One of six family donors and past INT Board Member



Protecting the

Eastern Kings Hardwoods

Just north of Souris, PEI, 219 acres of upland hardwood forest is at risk of being cleared. Fortunately, Island Nature Trust has the critical opportunity to purchase and protect this land, forever.

This region contains the Island's largest contiguous upland forest and is home to some of the oldest forest in the Province.

The property contains significant hardwood forests and the Cross River. The ecosystems present provide important wildlife habitat, including that for the federally at risk Canada warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*), eastern woodpeewee (*Contopus virens*), and Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

To acquire this land, we need your support to raise \$100,000 by March 27, 2026. Donate today, and your contribution will be tripled by our funding partners.

**Donate today to
protect this land forever**

To learn more, scan the QR code, or go to islandnaturetrust.ca/protect-easternkings



Pictured: Pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)

Donation Spotlight

If you've ever looked out your window and caught a glimpse of a favourite bird at the feeder, you know the special kind of joy that comes from feeding birds during the winter months. A long-time supporter of the Trust, Phillips Agri Services in Charlottetown continues this tradition by generously donating a portion of the proceeds from their wild bird food sales to our work. Known for their quality seed and excellent selection of birdhouses, Phillips Agri Services also offers locally grown black oil sunflower seeds, from Blue Shank Farms near Summerside.

We extend our sincere thanks to Phillips Agri Services for this thoughtful donation. Their continued support helps protect the habitats and ecosystems that birds depend on, ensuring these species can thrive for generations to come.



Give A Hoot Campaign Update

As winter settles in, we invite you to embrace the season not as a pause, but as a practice. Bundle up, step outside, and let the quiet work of nature remind you that regeneration is always underway - for the land, and for us too. As the Give a Hoot campaign comes to a close, we're thrilled to celebrate the incredible impact of our supporters. Together, our community raised more than \$37,000 for conservation on Prince Edward Island, an inspiring show of care for Island nature.

These funds will help protect natural areas, care for habitats, and support species at risk across the Island. Your support gives us the momentum to plan ahead and keep this vital work moving forward.

Most of all, Give a Hoot showed that Island nature matters and that our community is ready to protect it. Thank you for standing with Island Nature Trust and helping ensure a future where wildlife and natural places can flourish.



Evening grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)

Wildlife Conservation Fund

Island Nature Trust has been incredibly lucky to have an ever-growing group of wonderful volunteers. Their hardwork and dedication allows us to vastly expand the breadth of our work both in our Natural Areas and in our conservation efforts for species at risk.

This year, we were thrilled to receive funding from the Wildlife Conservation Fund to develop a new platform for our volunteers. This platform will make it easier for our volunteers to share data and photos, schedule their surveys, access maps and training materials, and interact with staff and other volunteers. With support from Holland College's Business Analytics Centre, we hope to have a pilot platform ready for testing this summer with a final version being launched later in 2026!

A huge thank you to the Wildlife Conservation Fund and Holland College Business Analytics Centre for your commitment to supporting our wonderful volunteers!



2025 Volunteer Appreciation Event



Dedicated volunteers showing up rain or shine to learn about coastal erosion!

Nature Canada's NatureHood Program



Winter walk at Jenkins Complex Natural Area with IRSA.

Thanks to the support of Nature Canada's NatureHood program, the Wildlife Conservation Fund, and partnerships with the Immigrant and Refugee Services Association (IRSA) and Girl Guides, we were able to provide programming to newcomers and young girls.

We connected with over 30 newcomers to provide engaging programming both in and outdoors.

We also visited the Spring Park Guide unit and explored the function and importance of wetland ecosystems.



Learning about the different coastal ecosystems present in Prince Edward Island.

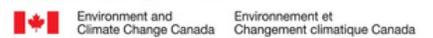
Learning to identify conifer species.



Testing our wetland models at Girl Guides!



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Investing in Healthier Island Forests

We are thrilled to share that RBC Foundation has selected Island Nature Trust as a recipient for one of their Community Investments. Our project focuses on best management practices that promote carbon sequestration, provisioning of ecosystem services, and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

Over the course of the two-year project, Island Nature Trust will be creating and monitoring a network of demonstration plots that will illustrate the outcome of different silvicultural techniques.

Implementing these techniques on small demonstration plots will allow us to collect high-quality data to track the techniques over time as compared to control plots. We will also implement these interventions on a larger scale on some of our other natural areas where existing plantations provide an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the techniques at the stand level.

Our goal is to make understanding ecological silviculture more accessible to the Island community. We will be offering visits to the demonstration areas and sharing the process of creating and monitoring these areas through our various communication channels.

This past November, we hosted a site visit in partnership with the PEI Woodlot Owners Association to our Farmington Woodland Natural Area. This Natural Area was the site of stand-level silvicultural interventions in Summer/Fall 2025. The visit allowed 17 participants to see how different treatments can be implemented and how those treatments are chosen based on many factors including dominant tree species, stand age, and management goals.



Thanks to the support of RBC Foundation, we have the opportunity to implement this project and share the outcomes with all Islanders.

Planting long lived hardwood tree species within treated areas is one technique that will be demonstrated.

Restoration, Education, and Freshwater Protection

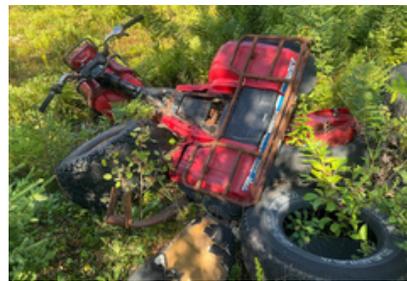
As stewards of over 13,000 acres of protected land across PEI, including over 50 kilometers of streams and 2,000 acres of freshwater wetlands, we are excited to announce that Island Nature Trust was chosen for a three-year project funded in part by the Government of Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program. This program funds projects that contribute to improvements of freshwater quality and ecosystem health.

Through our three-year project we will be increasing educational resources and training for Conservation Guardians, providing hands-on education to youth, managing invasive species, removing dumpsites near freshwater habitats, and restoring ecosystems through planting native species, replacing old bridges and re-routing trails that infringe on riparian habitats.

Thusfar, with the support of the Province of PEI and the 2 Billion Trees program we facilitated the planting of 8,833 trees in a retired field adjacent to a wetland in need of restoration. Thanks to volunteers from Plaza Retail REIT (pictured below) for planting an additional 18 flowering plants at the site to provide an important source of nectar for pollinators.



With the help of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation's Conservation & Stewardship Program we removed 4,254 pounds of debris from a wetland at our Hay River Natural Area.



This three-wheeler and old tires were among some of the debris removed from Hay River Natural Area.

We are also excited to announce new resources and equipment for our Conservation Guardians. We now have backpacks filled with resources and equipment, as well as iPads that can be signed out for monitoring visits. Conservation Guardians will also be receiving a new handbook. The handbook contains important information about surveying different ecosystems and instructions on the monitoring program *Landscape*. Guardians will also be invited to attend a webinar focused on wetland ecosystems coming up in March.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de



Canada
Water Agency

Agence de l'eau
du Canada



Kaylee Busniuk

Stewardship &
Engagement Manager



Citizen Science: iNaturalist Summary

Over the last 10 years, the iNaturalist platform has been adopted by many professional and amateur naturalists to record biodiversity worldwide.

The benefits of encouraging citizen science are threefold:

- a large number of field observers provide good species coverage throughout the seasons;
- many citizen scientists have professional or amateur expertise in one or more species/taxa; and
- citizen nature scientists are people who are keen to protect nature and habitats.

In PEI, over 4,000 people have now posted to the platform – representing a biodiversity record of 6,600 species across the province.

A few years ago, Island Nature Trust created its own iNaturalist project to track citizen science in its protected Natural Areas.

The project home page gives you a real-time, up-to-date snapshot of all nature observations posted to the platform across all Natural Areas. The home page is a great place to start if you are interested in exploring any species on Island Nature Trust properties.

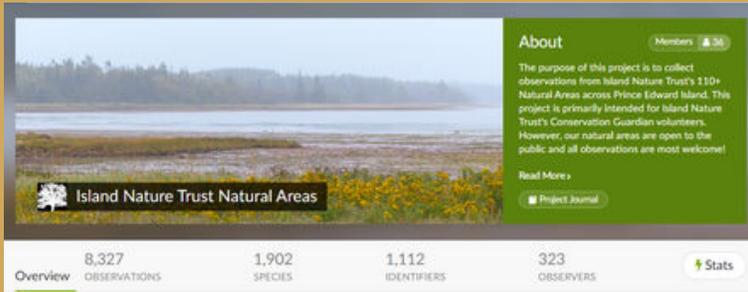


Painted trillium observed at Acadian Marshes - Percival River Salt Marsh Natural Area on 25 May 2024.

The iNaturalist platform is an extensive web-based searchable database. All the data on the platform is easily searchable by many criteria (user, geography, species, dates, etc.). Publicly accessible data is what makes iNaturalist valuable to scientists for research.

By extracting multiple years of data from the platform, INT can already start to gain some insights across its over 110 Natural Areas, such as:

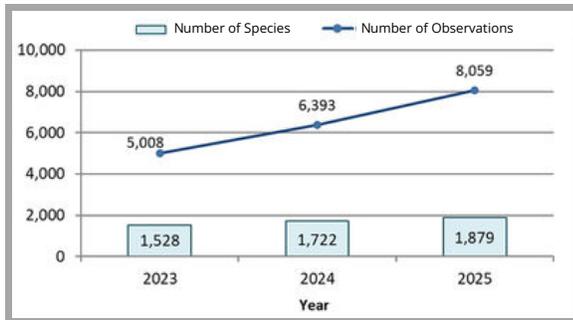
- citizen science activity trends across individual or groups of Natural Areas, counties, etc.;
- the quantity and awareness of new species posted each year; and
- especially the postings of any new Threatened and Introduced species.



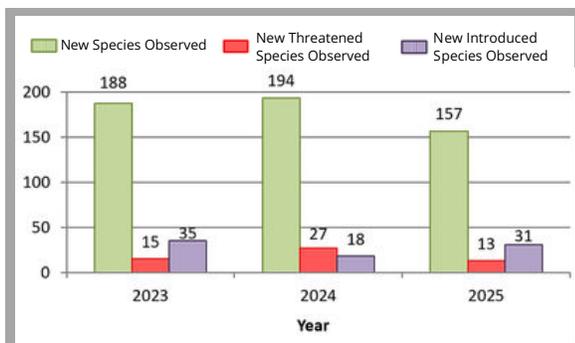
To reach the INT's iNaturalist home page, click [here](#).

Pictured in header: Conservation Guardian visit to Holland Natural Area on 8 July 2024. All photos submitted by Denis Gallant.

The 3-year trend graph below shows that citizen science activity on INT properties is growing steadily. The iNaturalist project has maintained a consistent 25% year-over-year growth in the number of observations recorded over the last couple of years. Also growing is the total number of species recorded to the project.

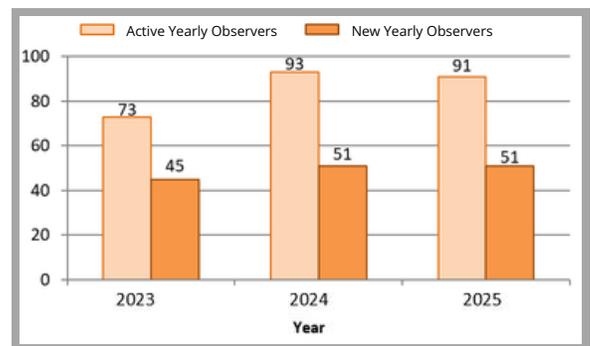


For comprehensive biodiversity information and tracking, it is important to have species data continuously posted over time, across seasons, and across geography. Also interesting to monitor are new species to the project, especially those classified by iNaturalist as threatened or introduced.



In the iNaturalist system, an Observer is a person who has made one or more postings to the platform. The graph below provides a clear view of how many people are visiting INT's properties and contributing to the biodiversity record.

It's especially great to see new people participate each year and thereby grow the total number of potential Observers for future years.



As more data is posted to iNaturalist over the next few years, it will enable better trend analysis and provide insights into INT's properties.



Denis Gallant
Conservation Guardian
& Citizen Scientist

Want to become a Conservation Guardian?

Join our waitlist to be notified about spring training by emailing Kaylee at engage@islandnaturetrust.ca



Lunch during a Conservation Guardian visit to MapleCross Nebraska Creek Natural Area on 15 September 2025.



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Pictured: Eastern kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)