



ISLAND
NATURE
TRUST

NOV 2024
#162

*Dedicated to the
Protection of Natural
Areas in Prince Edward
Island Since 1979*

**THIS
HOLIDAY
SEASON,
LET'S GIVE
A HOOT
ABOUT
NATURE!**



Magazine



INT

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Throughout the magazine you will see QR codes accompanying some articles. The codes are a gateway to additional online info & resources.

When you see a code simply open your smartphone camera app, aim at the code and click the pop-up link on your screen. You will then be taken directly to the article or page on your smartphone browser.

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INT



Dear Friends,

We are so excited to share with you our fall magazine which highlights some of the most recent accomplishments and activities of the Trust.

Fall is the season of gratitude, and we are most thankful for the support of supporters, volunteers and donors who have shared their ambitious time, treasure and talent to contribute towards a nature-positive future on Prince Edward Island.

Conservation work connects people, communities and nature and this is a message that we hope to amplify in the stories we share with you. As you'll learn on page 16, we had a tremendous response to our call out to ask for volunteers for our guardian programs. The enthusiasm of those profiled is very impactful. It creates momentum for conservation and a connection to the habitats and landscapes that the Trust is working to protect.

Wishing you and yours a warm and healthy holiday season,

Melissa Cameron
Executive Director

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Let's Give a Hoot About Nature This Holiday Season



Birds, like the barred owl make their home in our Island's forests and wetlands and are signs of healthy ecosystems. While you might not see them, you may hear them with their distinctive call that sounds like: "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all".

With their soulful brown eyes, they rely on us to protect their habitats so that they can snooze peacefully on the branches of our Island's trees. Caring for the natural spaces across the Island allows birds to find their preferred nesting habitats and when barred owls and other birds thrive, we all thrive.

As we enter the festive season, there's a special way to give back to nature: by supporting the birds that call Prince Edward Island their home. These birds are more than just a beautiful part of our landscapes—they play a critical role in our ecosystems. Unfortunately, many of them face serious threats. From habitat loss to climate change, Canada's bird populations are declining, but with your support, Island Nature Trust is working hard to protect them.

According to The State of Canada's Birds report, released by Birds Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada, several of PEI's bird species are in steep decline. Shorebirds, including the endangered piping plover, have declined by 42% since 1980. These shorelines and wetlands are crucial breeding and resting grounds for these birds, and habitat loss puts them at great risk. Similarly, aerial insectivores like the bank swallow



have been declining due to changes in habitat and food availability, with populations stabilizing but still far below their historical numbers. These species depend on undisturbed coastal areas to survive and thrive.

By donating to Island Nature Trust, you are helping to safeguard the critical habitats that birds and other wildlife need to survive. Every dollar counts and supports our ability to protect and steward our Natural Areas.

Conservation Success Stories:

There is hope. The State of Canada's Birds report shows that when we act, bird populations can recover. Birds of prey and wetland birds have made impressive comebacks in other parts of Canada due to focused conservation efforts. These victories remind us that we can make a positive impact on the future of PEI's birds.

To learn more about bird conservation and how you can help, you can also refer to The State of Canada's Birds report, which outlines actions everyone can take to support declining species.
<https://www.birdscanada.org/introducing-the-state-of-canadas-birds>

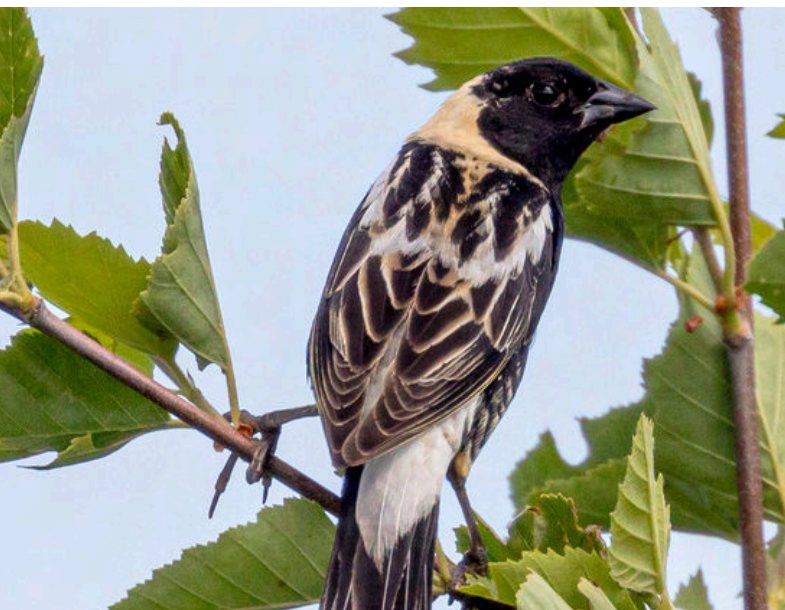


How You Can Help: Island Nature Trust relies on the support of volunteers and donors to continue our work protecting PEI's birds and natural habitats. Here's how you can make a difference:

- **Donate** to Island Nature Trust to help support bird conservation efforts.
- **Volunteer** as a Coastal Guardian to monitor sensitive nesting sites.
- **Reduce threats** to birds by keeping outdoor cats contained.

Join Us in Protecting PEI's Birds This holiday season, we invite you to support PEI's birds with your donation to Island Nature Trust. Your contribution will help us protect natural spaces and ensure that species at risk have a future.

Donate today at
<https://secure.islandnaturetrust.ca/give-a-hoot-about-nature> and give our birds the gift of a safe home this holiday season.



Survivor for a Cause: How PEI's Fraser McCallum Used Reality TV to Raise Awareness for Island Nature Trust

In a world of reality TV where backstabbing and strategizing often take center stage, one Islander is using his love for Survivor to make a real difference in conservation. Fraser McCallum, a Parks Canada employee and the lone Canadian contestant in the "Can You Survive?" charity version of Survivor, raised both awareness and funds for Island Nature Trust, channeling his passion for nature into meaningful action. This unique event took place in the remote wilderness of the North Maine Woods with a few dozen American participants.

"I've long respected and appreciated Island Nature Trust," Fraser said during an interview with INT, highlighting how his personal values align with INT's mission. Raised on 100 acres of forest and farmland in Queens County, PEI, Fraser grew up learning about land stewardship from his father, who he described as an "amazing steward." These values shaped Fraser's decision to support Island Nature Trust during the charity competition. "Having seen the work that remains after post-tropical storm Fiona, it felt like an immediate answer to the question of which charity I would support," he explained.

INT's work to acquire and protect old-growth forests—creating an interconnected network of natural areas—hit home for Fraser, especially in the aftermath of Fiona. The devastation caused by the storm deeply affected Fraser and his family, whose property suffered extensive damage.





“Watching my dad’s work and the community’s work dashed was heartbreaking,” he shared. But in true Survivor spirit, he also witnessed efforts to rebuild, giving him hope for the future. “If I can bring attention and a little funding to those efforts, that will outlive my family,” Fraser added, emphasizing the importance of planting mixed stands to support the flourishing of the Wabanaki-Acadian Forest in PEI.

Fraser’s connection to Island Nature Trust didn’t begin with the Survivor-style competition. As someone who works with Parks Canada on new parks establishment, Fraser has collaborated with INT and L’nuey on the new Pituamkek National Park Reserve in Malpeque Bay, underscoring INT’s vital role in protecting PEI’s natural beauty. “Island Nature Trust has been quintessential to the success of that becoming the 48th National Park in Canada,” he said.

Fraser’s journey as a Survivor contestant was not just about enduring the elements,

though he did find his skills in “campcraft” and survival useful during the game. “People were calling me ‘Ranger Fraser’ when they found out I worked for Parks Canada,” he laughed, recalling how his comfort in the woods helped him connect with other contestants. Yet, despite his practical skills, the game was largely about social strategy, which he admitted was challenging. “I realized that maybe I’m a little too kind and warm-hearted for some of that backstabbing stuff.”

One of the most rewarding aspects of the experience for Fraser was the opportunity to share his love for conservation with people who had little exposure to forest stewardship. “Sitting around a campfire at night, I put on my conservation hat and explained the importance of forests, Fiona recovery efforts, and stewardship to people from New Jersey, North Carolina, and even Manhattan,” he recalled. “Even if it doesn’t lead to immediate change, it’s planting a seed in someone’s mind to think about this stuff.”

In addition to the conversations around the campfire, Fraser's fundraising efforts exceeded his expectations. "I surpassed my fundraising goal immediately," he shared, noting the surprising support he received from friends and even acquaintances with personal connections to forest stewardship. "Someone sent me \$200—it was my brother's best friend from grade school!"

For Fraser, participating in Survivor was about more than just winning a game. It was about making a tangible impact on his community and inspiring others to do the same. "I think it's the start of something for me," he said, expressing his desire to continue advocating for conservation efforts in PEI. "I hope more people pay attention and get involved with Island Nature Trust. There's endless work to do."

Fraser's experience serves as a reminder that even in a competitive environment, collaboration and a shared vision for the future can inspire others to take action. His involvement with Survivor has brought attention to the vital work of Island Nature Trust, ensuring that the Wabanaki-Acadian forests of PEI are protected for generations to come.

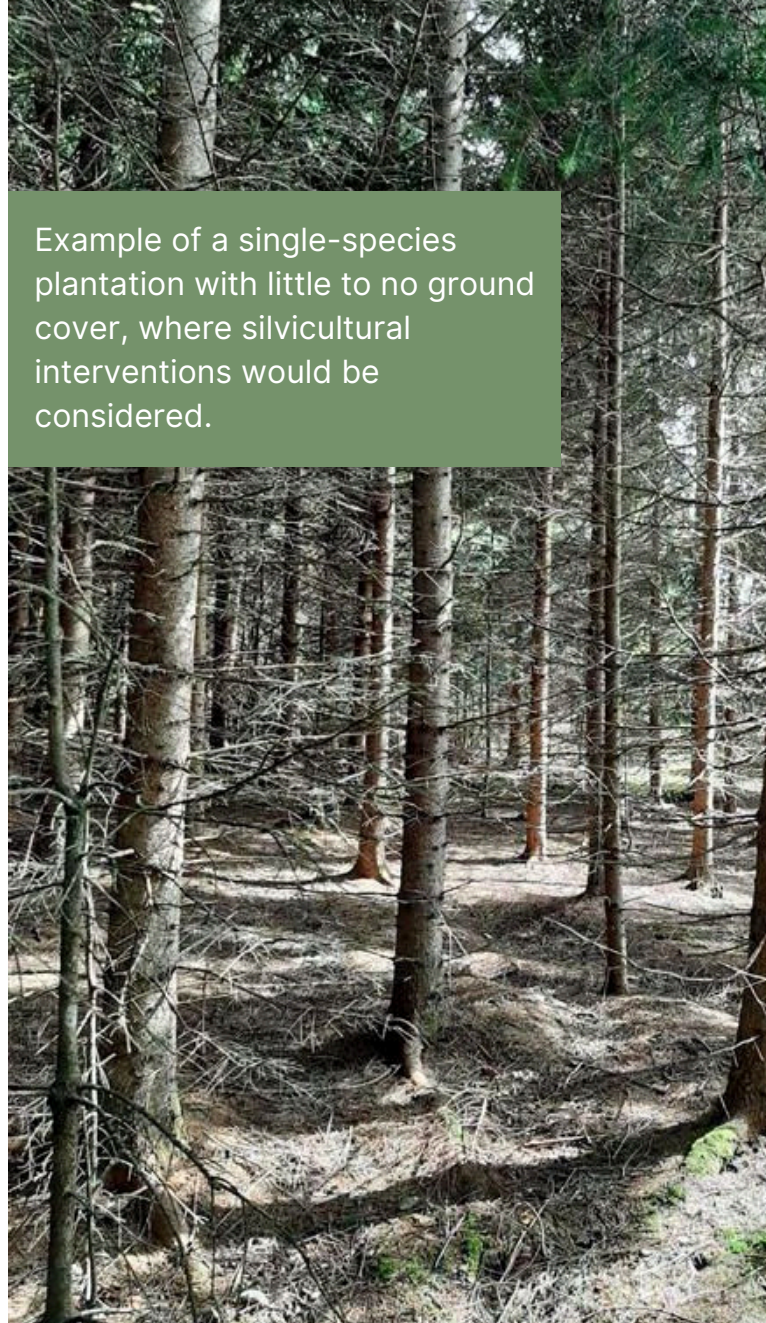


For young people looking to make a difference, Fraser offers a simple yet powerful message: "You don't have to wait for the perfect opportunity—just start. Whether it's donating time, money, or simply raising awareness, every bit helps."

By combining his love for nature with a bit of reality TV magic, Fraser McCallum has proven that we can all be survivors when it comes to protecting the environment. And with his continued involvement, the future of Island Nature Trust looks even brighter. Learn more about the Wabanaki-Acadian Forest at <https://islandnaturetrust.ca/protect/>.



This summer and fall, our team of staff conducted forest assessments on a diverse selection of Natural Areas and produced four forest management plans. These management plans will be used by Island Nature Trust in the future to conduct ecological silviculture work to restore plantation and old field white spruce forests to enhance wildlife habitat. This work was supported by the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund.



Protecting PEI's Bank Swallows One Colony at a Time

Thanks in part to support from the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund, our team of staff and volunteers were able to survey approximately 450 kilometres of coastline for bank swallow nesting habitat. Staff and volunteers completed over 200 surveys along our coastline and more than 100 colonies were surveyed. Additionally, five local colonies were surveyed weekly from May until August which resulted in the collection of nearly 1,300 minutes of video recordings of breeding activity.





UPEI Intern Spotlight: Haley McKenna

Nature education is a crucial pillar to addressing present day environmental issues. While natural education can be a valuable experience in any form, I believe the best practice is to teach students about their local environments and to give them the opportunity to leave the four walls of the classroom and have hands-on experiences in local environments. This kind of learning helps to build connections between the student and their environment, and gives them a memorable learning experience. This is why I was thrilled to find myself on a windy beach standing behind a folding table lined with sandy roasting pans and awaiting the arrival of a large group of seventh grade students.

Photo: Hayley teaching a group of students preparing to build and test the four erosion models.

I am in my final year at the University of Prince Edward Island where I am majoring in Environmental Studies with a specialization in Environmental Thought and Practice. As a part of my final year, I am enrolled in a course that connects students with internship experiences in the environmental field. I was lucky enough to be partnered with Island Nature Trust and assigned to help conduct the annual Beach Dune Ecosystem Field Trips. These field trips are designed to teach seventh grade students about the key features of beach ecosystems, the different life forms that can be found on beaches, and introduces them to the concept of erosion. The field trips take place on beaches across the Island, depending on the location of the school. Each field trip features a set of stations that students rotate between.

One station is dedicated to intertidal invertebrates and allows students to collect their own samples and sift through the sand to search for invertebrates. Students can then see their discoveries under a microscope. Another station teaches students about erosion where they build and test four different models of beach dune ecosystems. The models are built within roasting pans with a hole at the end and a tube extending from it. Each group builds a model containing different features, one has a dune (represented by a sand and cat grass plants) and a wrack line (represented by a clump of seaweed at the bottom of the pan), one has just a wrack line, another has rock armouring (a rock wall constructed in the middle), and a final model is just plain sand.

Students then predict which model will erode the most, test the models by pouring water along them, and observe how much sand comes out of the tubes. Typically, students conclude that having natural features such as dune vegetation and wrack lines are important to prevent erosion.

Attending these field trips has been a valuable learning experience for me. I enjoyed watching the students engage with the material, laugh with each other as they collected samples for invertebrates, and get excited when observing the results of the models they build. I feel that these field trips have introduced important concepts to the next generation of environmental stewards that they can continue to build on throughout their education.



Tackling Invasive Species to Protect PEI's Ecosystems

You may have heard the term 'invasive species' before but what exactly does that mean? An invasive species is an introduced plant, insect, disease or animal that outcompetes native species and causes harm to the surrounding ecosystem. Not all non-native species are considered invasive, the key difference is invasive species cause negative impacts in one of three ways: environmentally, socially and/or economically. According to the IUCN, invasive species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity loss; the destruction they cause goes beyond one species overtaking another — they can devastate entire ecosystems, impacting food sources and habitat for wildlife, decrease ecosystem resilience, spread diseases and cause economic damage to industries.

Sharing Knowledge

Island Nature Trust takes pride in staying up to date with the latest research and methods for managing the spread of invasive species. We attend webinars, forums, and other educational events to ensure we are knowledgeable about current management practices. These events also provide opportunities to connect with other environmental groups, exchanging new tips and techniques we can apply to our next invasive species project. Many of these educational events are open to the public, so if you are interested in learning more about invasive species,



If you see a boot brush like this at the entrance of trails, please make sure to use it to keep our natural spaces healthy!

consider contacting the PEI Invasive Species Council (PEIISC)! Additionally, INT occasionally hosts community events focused on invasive species, where you can learn more and play an active role in mitigating invasives on PEI.

Managing invasive species is a community effort, as most invasives spread through human activities. This can range from spreading invasive garden plants, transporting firewood, and carrying seeds on shoes, clothing, or vehicles. One of the most critical aspects of invasive species management is preventing their spread. Planting native species, proper disposal of garden waste, buying local firewood, and cleaning your clothing and vehicles before and after visits to natural areas are a few ways you can help control the spread of invasive species. This year, the INT stewardship team installed boot brush stations at the entrances to our Jenkins Complex and Buote Heritage Woods Natural Areas to limit any new introductions.


Mapping

This past year, the stewardship team set out on our Natural Areas to conduct invasive species surveys to map out the presence and abundance. These surveys function as targeted biological inventories, also known as bioinventories, which are an integral part of the role of the stewardship team. Bioinventories provide a list of species richness and diversity, establishing a baseline of the overall health of the forest. Knowledge of the spread of invasive species on PEI is still limited; this information helps us make informed management decisions for future conservation efforts. **Understanding what species are present and where they are located is vital, and you can play a role in closing this knowledge gap!** By learning to identify invasive species, keeping an eye out for them, and reporting your sightings, you can contribute significantly to conservation efforts. Reporting sightings is perhaps the most important step, and you can do this through iNaturalist, by contacting us directly, or by reaching out to our partner organization, the PEI Invasive Species Council (PEIISC).

Collaboration

This year in collaboration with the PEIISC, and with the help of On-the-Job Training students from Holland College, we removed a patch of Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) located on our Hennessey Farm Woodland Natural Area. Scotch broom is an invasive shrub-like plant that is commonly grown in gardens. Due to its ability to produce a copious number of seeds, it can quickly spread to surrounding ecosystems.

Its abundant seed production, combined with its deep and extensive root system make it difficult to eradicate once established. To improve our chances of a successful removal, we set out in early spring -before seeds are produced- and used a specialized tool called an “extractigator” to clamp the base of the plant and remove the root system. This effort was a success, as we were able to remove the entire patch, reducing the number of mature seed producing plants, helping slow the spread. In future years our team will monitor this site to remove any re-growth.



The extensive root system of Scotch broom removed from Hennessey Farm Woodland Natural Area.

Additionally, we continued our annual monitoring for two invasive insects, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), neither of which has been detected on PEI. Catching these invasive insects before establishment is essential; once established, the likelihood of successful eradication becomes extremely low and sometimes impossible. To monitor for these insects, we set out specialized traps to detect any early signs of their arrival. In addition to setting traps, the stewardship team conducted a new ball sampling monitoring technique targeting HWA. This method involves using a slingshot to shoot a Velcro-covered ball into the hemlock canopy to collect the woolly coating that protects the egg-sac. Thankfully, our monitoring efforts showed no signs of the presence of EAB or HWA but with the increasing threat of their arrival, our work is far from over.

This work was supported by:



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Environment and
Climate Change Canada

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INT staff using the ball sampling technique.

Conservation Town Halls: Island Nature Trust Unites Landowners to Protect PEI's Forest Landscapes

Island Nature Trust recently hosted an ambitious, conservation-focused initiative funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada and PEI's Forested Landscape Priority Place Program. The goal? To identify and protect ecologically valuable areas on Prince Edward Island. Using mapping tools, INT selected four priority regions. These mapping tools compiled data from various sources, highlighting which areas could make the biggest impact in reaching PEI's conservation goals of 7% protected land by 2030.

Once these regions were identified, INT reached out to local landowners, inviting them to explore ways they could join this mission of protecting the Island's natural landscapes and ecological health. In October 2024, INT hosted a series of five land conservation events across the island. Four of these events brought people together at community centers, creating spaces for conversation about the many ways landowners can contribute to conservation. These gatherings included insights on PEI's Natural Areas Protection Act (NAPA) and introduced volunteer opportunities for those eager to lend a hand.

The fifth event, an outdoor walk at INT's Jenkins Complex Natural Area, brought conservation to life, giving participants an up-close look at one of the properties that INT protected under NAPA. The event series was a success, sparking connections with many new landowners and inspiring fresh enthusiasm for safeguarding PEI's unique landscapes for future generations. With new partnerships and a shared vision for conservation, INT is excited to work with landowners who are interested in conserving the island's natural landscapes.



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137 Acres
Now Protected

Land Acquisition Highlight: Percival River



Blue flag iris, a plant species native to Eastern Canada

Island Nature Trust is thrilled to announce the purchase of 137 acres (55 hectares) of ecologically significant saltmarsh and forest along the Percival River in Portage, Prince County. The acquisition of this parcel protects the largest contiguous band of saltmarsh on PEI and adds onto over 4500 acres of protected land along the Percival River, with 689 acres of that owned by INT.

This new addition to the Acadian Marshes – Percival River Natural Area fronts on the Bay Road, with diverse forest stands containing sections of mature red maple, white pine, and white spruce. The property is dominated by marsh and swampy areas with alders, amphibians, and an understory with Canada fly honeysuckle, Joe Pye weed, skunk currant, blue flag iris (pictured), and various ferns. These shrubby, wet areas contain excellent habitat for the federally at-risk Canada warbler. The saltmarsh on the property totals 25 acres and is primarily comprised of cordgrasses in both high and low marsh zones.

The Percival River was historically used by the Mi'kmaq to travel between the Northumberland Strait and Cascumpec Bay through “Unikansuk,” which means “portage trail.”

This property will be designated under the PEI Natural Areas Protection Act, ensuring that the ecosystems present will be protected forever.

Media Spotlight

INT
IN THE
NEWS



SALTWIRE



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Island Nature Trust Sees Overwhelming Response Following CBC Coverage

Following an October 10 [article](#) published by CBC News, Island Nature Trust received an overwhelming response from Islanders eager to join its Conservation Guardian program. The article highlighted the need for more volunteers to monitor and protect the ever-expanding network of Natural Areas safeguarded by INT, resonating deeply with the community. In the days after publication, nearly one hundred Islanders reached out, expressing a desire to become Conservation Guardians, showcasing their commitment to protecting the Island's natural beauty.

In response to this surge in interest, INT organized five training sessions in October and November, held at Jenkins Complex, Buote Heritage Woods, Barbara Green, and Kildare Forest Natural Areas. These sessions are designed to introduce new volunteers to the basics of the Conservation Guardian role, including what to look for such as identifying human disturbances, and learning how to use the monitoring app our Stewardship team uses. Across the five events over 40 new volunteers are attending, immersing themselves in the responsibilities and joys of becoming a guardian of PEI's wild spaces.



INT Executive Director Melissa Cameron reflected on the community's response: "It's inspiring to see how deeply Islanders care about protecting the land. The response to the CBC article has been incredible, and it reminds us of the shared commitment we all have to conserve PEI's natural heritage. With the support of these new volunteers, we're more prepared than ever to monitor and protect our natural areas."

The Conservation Guardian program plays a critical role in INT's efforts, especially as the number of protected areas has grown to over 111 sites across Prince Edward Island. Guardians are essential in monitoring these lands, helping INT detect early signs of human interference or ecological change. Thanks to this recent outpouring of support, INT's reach will extend further, and we plan to continue working with the community to expand our network of dedicated guardians Island-wide.





The surge in community support for Island Nature Trust's Conservation Guardian program has underscored Islanders' dedication to protecting PEI's natural landscapes. With volunteers stepping up to protect these habitats, INT is poised to make an even greater impact across the Island. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has shown interest, attended training, and offered their time to safeguard these cherished spaces. The response has been nothing short of inspiring, affirming the deep-rooted care that Islanders have for their environment.

And as we look ahead to the festive season, there's an additional way for Islanders to show their love for the natural world.

In the spirit of giving, INT is launching a holiday fundraiser, **"Let's Give a Hoot About Nature This Holiday Season,"** inviting everyone to support the birds that make PEI their home. These birds do more than add beauty to our landscapes; they play a vital role in our ecosystems. Unfortunately, many of them face significant threats—from habitat loss to the impacts of climate change.

By supporting INT's holiday fundraiser, you can help protect species at risk and with a gift this season, you'll join a community working to restore habitats, monitor populations, and engage Islanders in conservation.

Read the original full CBC here:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-island-nature-trust-more-land-needs-more-volunteers-1.7347523>

Keeping Our Island Clean: INT's Essential Role in Protecting Natural Areas

At Island Nature Trust, we are committed to safeguarding the natural beauty of Prince Edward Island. This summer, our stewardship team collected approximately 1,500 pounds of illegally dumped waste across our properties. From household appliances to hazardous materials, improperly disposed waste poses a serious threat to the health of our ecosystems and adds a significant financial burden to our organization.

A recent [*SaltWire*](#) article highlighted the growing issue of illegal dumping on Prince Edward Island, underscoring the need for collective action to protect our environment. "It's quite disappointing," says Kaylee Busniuk, Stewardship and Engagement Manager for Island Nature Trust. "Not only is illegal dumping against the law, but it degrades the ecosystems in those areas." When hazardous materials corrode or break down, they release harmful chemicals into the soil and water, contaminating the land and threatening local wildlife. Large items like furniture and appliances are especially challenging, requiring time, resources, and strenuous labour to remove.

Invasive plant species are also a concern. "Invasive plants are often illegally dumped, and they can disrupt native ecosystems, which adds to the work of our team," explains Kaylee. "These plants spread quickly, outcompeting native species and threatening the biodiversity of our Natural Areas."

Our stewardship efforts go beyond just waste removal; they include the protection, maintenance, and monitoring of more than 11,000 acres of natural land. "The cost of responding to illegal dumping is a large burden on our organization," says Kaylee. "It takes away from other vital conservation work that we need to do."





Individuals disposing of their trash illegally have made a dumpsite of recyclable materials at INT's Natural Area near Forest Hill, P.E.I.



Stewardship is a cornerstone of Island Nature Trust's mission, and it is only possible with the support of the community. Cash donations help cover the costs of clean-ups, maintain necessary resources, and support the staff and volunteers who dedicate themselves to protecting these spaces.

"Education is key," Kaylee adds. "Many items being dumped illegally can be disposed of for free at Waste Watch facilities. People can drop off hazardous waste, large items, and even invasive plants. It's a simple and accessible solution that helps protect our environment."

To deter illegal dumping, Island Nature Trust also installs gates, signs, and shares information to educate the public on proper disposal options.

If you care about protecting our Island's natural spaces, you can make a difference by supporting Island Nature Trust. Donations to **Stewardship: Nature & Conservation** directly support these vital conservation efforts. To contribute, visit <https://secure.islandnaturetrust.ca/donate>.

With your help, we can continue our work to keep P.E.I.'s landscapes clean, healthy, and beautiful for generations to come.

This article was inspired by SaltWire's recent coverage, which sheds light on the critical challenges illegal dumping poses for our Island. Together, we can turn awareness into action and create lasting change for Prince Edward Island's natural spaces.

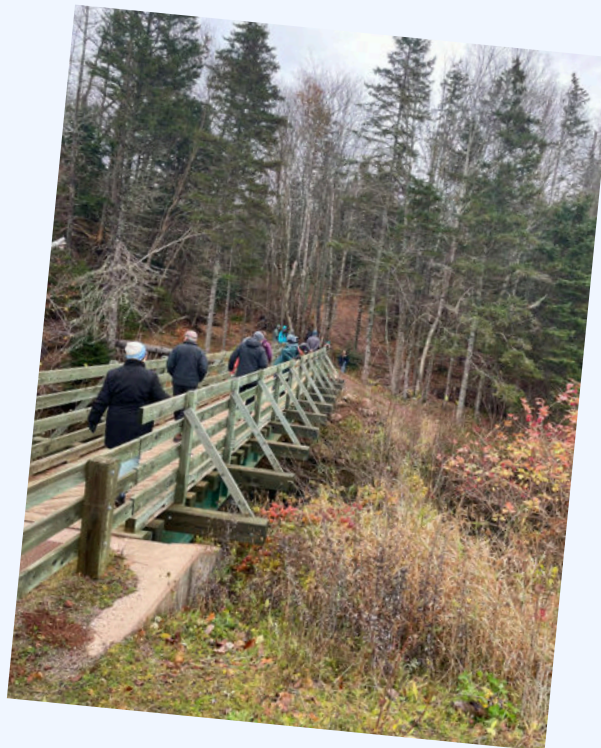
Left: Along with household material being illegally dumped on P.E.I, individuals have thrown away yellow archangel, a garden plant that is well known to be invasive.

Big Picture



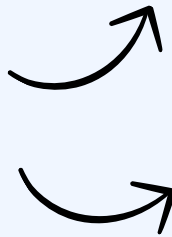
With support from the Community Foundation of Prince Edward Island and the Living Memorial Trust Fund, Island Nature Trust's stewardship team recently enhanced the Veterans' Serenity Area within the Jenkins Complex Natural Area. These efforts aimed to develop a peaceful, accessible space for all Islanders, fostering a deeper connection to nature and promoting well-being. Projects included purchasing and planting native species such as chokeberry, round-leaved dogwood, and milkweed to enhance biodiversity in the Serenity Area.

Guardian and volunteer appreciation event held in Bonshaw





Donor appreciation event
hosted at Government
House in September



The wildly
successful Island
Nature Trust
Trivia event
hosted at Bar1911
in early November



Dichelonyx elongata is a beetle species related to Junebugs in the family Scarabaeida. Photo by Jeanne Maki



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