

# POINT LEPREAU BIRD OBSERVATORY

## Report to the Saint John Naturalists' Club

For Annual Meeting - June 14, 2014

The Point Lepreau Bird Observatory (PLBO) has been a project of the Saint John Naturalists' Club since 1996 and completed its 19<sup>th</sup> spring migration monitoring season this year.

Thanks to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU) we were able to once again obtain a grant, this year for \$6,000 to fund a contract with our Dedicated Observer, Richard Blacquiere. DU's ongoing financial support is greatly appreciated!

Richard was contracted as Dedicated Observer to visually monitor seabird migration and act as a mentor to volunteers for a period of six weeks, from March 27 to May 7 of 2014. Thus the addition of migration data to the PLBO database was uninterrupted and was collected on a basis consistent with earlier years.

During this past year Dr. Ian Cameron completed a detailed analysis of migration data for years 2000-2012. His work involved assessing population trends and estimating East Coast migrant populations of the three scoter species and Common Eider and it produced some interesting and statistically significant information. He has concluded a steady decline in the numbers of scoters and Common Eider continues at an approximate rate of 3-4% per year. The information has been shared with officials at the Canadian Wildlife Service and it's hoped the article can be published in an upcoming edition of *NB Naturalist*, produced quarterly by Nature NB.

The electrical connection between the observatory building and the light station failed two years ago, leaving us without a convenient source of heat. Thanks to NB Power, the connection was repaired early this spring and our volunteers and Dedicated Observer enjoyed comfortable working conditions during the chilly period from mid-March through April.

Vital to this project are the hundreds of volunteer hours contributed each year by SJNC members and other New Brunswick naturalists. This involves at least 30 people and between 400 and 500 hours in total. We wouldn't be able to continue the project without them. Thanks once again, for your interest and effort during this past year!

Included in that volunteer effort are the contributions of the PLBO Committee, which is responsible to the Club for managing the PLBO activities. Current members include Eileen Pike, Bill Gentleman, Charles Graves and Hank Scarth. Eileen also acts as Committee Secretary and as contact person for volunteers.

NB Power employee Jim Elgee acts as our liaison with security officials at Point Lepreau to arrange for visitor access and Bill Gentleman oversees maintenance of the observatory building, with help from other club members. Collectively, their time, care and insight are invaluable to the project.

We also thank Richard Blacquiere for another job very well done as the contracted Dedicated Observer during the peak weeks of migration this spring. Not only is he the principal observer and mentor to volunteers, but he also inputs all migration data into our computerized system.

Lastly, we thank volunteers Paul Clark and Paul Mansz who have ensured our database remains accurate and up to date.

Respectively submitted,

Jim Wilson  
On Behalf of the Steering Committee