

POINT LEPREAU BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report to the Saint John Naturalists' Club

For Annual Meeting - June 13, 2015

The Point Lepreau Bird Observatory (PLBO) has been a project of the Saint John Naturalists' Club since 1996 and completed its 20th spring migration monitoring season this year. Who could have imagined!

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 this spring, for a period of six weeks from March 27 to May 7. Thus the addition of migration data to the PLBO database was uninterrupted and was collected on a basis consistent with earlier years.

Earlier this spring an in-depth analysis of PLBO migration data for years 2000-2012 prepared by Dr. Ian Cameron was published in *NB Naturalist* (Volume 41 No 2,3 and 4 2014), produced quarterly by Nature NB. It has been well received by both naturalists and officials at the Canadian Wildlife Service, which is responsible for managing seabird populations in Canada.

During the fall, winter and early spring of 2014-15 UNBSJ Honours student James Button conducted an Honours Project, analyzing migration data from the PLBO to determine peak migration periods and make an attempt at estimating Eastern populations of the three scoter species and Red-throated Loon. His thesis was presented in April and includes some interesting conclusions. A copy should be made available on our Club's website, if possible.

This past winter Club member Pattie McKerral volunteered to update and improve the custom software used to enter and extract the PLBO data. This is an overdue upgrade and Pattie has spent many hours on this important effort, which made the entry of spring 2015 observations much easier for our Dedicated Observer and will eventually make retrieval of data more efficient. I want to acknowledge and thank her for her special contributions!

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 one and all, for your interest and effort again 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, John Redstone, Hank Scarth and President Jan Riddell. Eileen also acts as Committee Secretary and she and Cheryl Gass act as contact persons for volunteers.

NB Power employee Jim Elgee is 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, along with Pattie, have ensured our database remains accurate and up to date.

Respectfully submitted,


Jim Wilson
On Behalf of the Steering Committee