

# POINT LEPREAU BIRD OBSERVATORY

## Annual Report to the Saint John Naturalists' Club - June 17, 2017

The Point Lepreau Bird Observatory (PLBO) has been a project of the Saint John Naturalists' Club since 1996 and completed its 22<sup>nd</sup> spring migration monitoring season this year.

In August of last year we received word that our Club, in partnership with Nature NB, would receive a grant of \$125,000 from the federal Environmental Damages Fund for a three-year project on migratory bird research and education in the Bay of Fundy region.

Thanks to Nature NB and the EDF we were able to use EDF funds for a contract with Dedicated Observer Todd Watts to conduct daily four-hour migration monitoring sessions in both mornings and afternoons during a six-week period from March 27<sup>th</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Richard Blacquiere assumed responsibility for scheduling volunteer visits to the PLBO this spring. That role was formerly done by Eileen Pike, who now lives in Ottawa. Richard, the former Dedicated Observer at the PLBO is very familiar with the role and we are very appreciative of his willingness to take this on.

UNBSJ graduate student James Kelley continued work on a two-year Master's project during the past year and kept myself and the PLBO Committee busy at various times. James will use current and historical PLBO data in an attempt to correlate weather conditions to seabird migration as well as develop a more accurate method of estimating East Coast populations of the three scoters and Red-throated Loons. He hopes to complete his work by the fall of 2017.

Club member Pattie McKerral continued work to update and improve the custom software used to enter and extract PLBO data. She has made the entry of observations much more efficient and the sorting and retrieval of data quicker and easier. Thank you Pattie!

In May of this year I represented the SJNC as an Intervenor at a formal hearing to consider the renewal of NB Power's license to operate the nuclear generating station at Point Lepreau. I was pleased to outline the two components of our nature research there – the spring migration monitoring of sea ducks and the tagging of Monarch butterflies during their fall migration. Members of the hearing panel asked several good questions following the 10-minute presentation.

In May NB Power arranged for a new privy to be set up on NB power property at the tip of the Point and our old one removed and taken away. This new facility is a huge improvement over the former building that porcupines had invaded, making each visit a potential brush with wildlife!

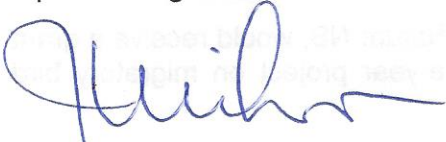
As a result of the SJNC presentation to the nuclear commission we recently received a request through NB Power to host a visit by the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick to the PLBO this fall, the Hon. Jocelyn Roy-Vienneau. Mme. Vienneau would like to learn about Monarchs and to tag a Monarch butterfly! Two tentative dates have been set in early September.

Vital to the PLBO are the hundreds of volunteer hours contributed each year by SJNC members and other New Brunswick naturalists. This involves more than 30 people and hundreds of people-hours in total. We wouldn't be able to continue the project without you. 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 PLBO activities. Current members include Eileen Pike, Bill Gentleman, Suzanne Bonnell, Hank Scarth and President Jan Riddell. Eileen also acts as Committee Secretary.

NB Power employee Jim Elgee continued as our liaison with security officials at Point Lepreau to arrange for visitor access. 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 Todd Watts for a job 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.



Jim Wilson  
On Behalf of the Steering Committee